

SURE HOUR SERIES

**SMOKE**

~~RICHARDSON~~

BY

TURGENIEFF

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We are washing  
our hands Now  
Now now I am on  
le main.

It was muddy because  
it had rained.

Il a aussi pluve

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Il a aussi pluve  
que il faisait  
pluvieux

# Wood Book

Nelly

Monday June 15

pg 60  
First London

It was muddy  
It was a cold  
place and it  
was pleasant

Faire, faisant, fait, fais,  
Fais, <sup>ous.</sup> nous faisons  
tu fais, nous faîtes  
il fait, et font.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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LEISURE HOUR SERIES.

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# SMOKE

## A RUSSIAN NOVEL

BY  
IVAN TURGÉNIEFF

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D93  
1872

*Translated from the Author's French Version*

BY  
WM. F. WEST, A.M.



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NEW YORK  
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY  
1873

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# ZOO-EH CAZOOK CLABBER DOG-FISH CADOOK

## SMOKE.

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On the afternoon of the 10th of August, 1862, a great crowd was gathered in front of the celebrated Conversation House at Baden-Baden. The weather was delightful. The green trees, the neat white houses of the pretty town, and the grand old mountains which towered above them, all seemed rejoicing in the bright sunshine. Nature wore a smiling face, and her joyous and holiday look was reflected in the features of all, whether old or young, homely or beautiful. Even the painted and powdered faces of the Parisian lorettes did not detract from the general gayety of the scene; their bright ribbons and feathers, and the glittering ornaments of gold and steel on their hats and veils, called to mind the bright colors of spring flowers and the fluttering of gayly-tinted wings. Here the comparison must end, how-

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ever, for the harsh tones of their French jargon bore no resemblance to the sweet voices of the birds.

The other surroundings of the place wore their usual look. The pavilion orchestra was playing now a potpourri from *Traviata*, now a Strauss waltz, or the *Russian romanza*, *Dites-lui*, arranged for the band by the obliging chapel-master. Around the green tables in the gambling hall were to be found the customary faces, with their stupefied, greedy and fierce expression, that *thief's look*, which the gambling fever imprints upon the most noble features. There could be seen the stout proprietor of Tambof, dressed in the most elegant bad taste, and almost crazy with excitement, (as his father used to be when beating his serfs.) His eyes seemed starting from his head, and he leaned anxiously forward above the table, regardless of the cold smiles of the *croupiers*, while he threw down his louis, each time too late to play, thus losing whatever chance there might be of gain. This, however, did not prevent him in the evening from repeating, with a great show of sympathy, the sayings of Prince Coco, the most celebrated among the nobility of the opposition party; the same Prince Coco who, at Paris, in the salon of Princess Mathilde,

and in the Emperor's presence, so neatly said: "Madame, in Russia, the property-holder has lost all his rights."

As usual, our dear countrymen and countrywomen were grouped about "the Russian Tree;" they met each other with that dignified *nonchalance*, that noble air which naturally belongs to beings standing on the highest rounds of the social ladder; but once seated all conversation ceased, and they endeavored to kill time, either by doing nothing at all, or by laughing at the stale, flat, and unrefined jokes of a Bohemian from Paris, a prating clown, who wore a miserable little beard upon his chin, and ugly shoes on his flat feet. His jokes, which were taken from old almanacs, from *Charivari* and *Tintamarre*, he retailed to these *Russian princes*, who replied by shouts of laughter, thus bearing witness to the great superiority of foreign wit, and to their own poverty of invention. Notwithstanding, these were the flower of our society, the most refined types of our countrymen. There was Count X., our incomparable dilettante, a great musical nature, who discourses *romanzas* so divinely, though he can not read without stumbling, and his singing resembles that of a Parisian barber. There was our irresistible baron Z., expert in everything;

editor, statesman, orator and scholar. There was Prince Y., a friend of religion and of the people, who had built up a colossal fortune, by buying a license to manufacture brandy, and then making it from belladonna. There was the brilliant General O., who had conquered some one or something, but who did not know how to control or properly present himself. There was P., an amusing fellow, who was thought to be an invalid and a man of great discernment, but who was really as strong as an ox and stupid as a log ; he was faithful to the traditions of the Countess Vorotinski, and devoted himself to "the practice of deportment," walking on his heels slowly and affectedly, training his otherwise expressionless features into a look of sleepy surliness, interrupting those speaking to him with a yawn, laughing through his nose, looking carefully at his fingers and nails, or suddenly pushing his hat from the back of his head to his eyebrows and *vice-versa*. There were statesmen and diplomatists of European renown, men of thought and culture, who believed that Irish bulls were issued by the Pope, and that the poor-tax was levied *on* the poor ; and, finally, there were the ardent but timid adorers of the stage, the young lions with hair carefully parted behind, with truly magnificent

side-whiskers, and wearing clothes of London cut. It seemed as though nothing was wanting to put these gentlemen on a footing with the Paris clown, but it was nevertheless a fact that our ladies slighted them. Even the Countess C., the renowned leader of fashion, nicknamed by malicious tongues "the queen of the wasps," and "Medusa in bonnet strings," gave the preference, in the clown's absence, to the Italians, the Moldavians, the shrewd Americans, the witty secretaries of foreign embassies, or even to the young German barons, all of whom were hovering near her. About this star revolved the Princess Babette, in whose arms Chopin expired, (there are a thousand ladies in Europe who had the same honor); the Princess Annette, who would be irresistible, if she did not so strongly resemble a stout country washerwoman; the unlucky Princess Pachette, whose husband had just been appointed provincial governor, when suddenly, God only knows why, he had beaten the mayor of his native town and run off with 20,000 roubles belonging to the crown; and last but not least, the noisy Mademoiselle Zizi, and the tearful Mademoiselle Zozo: these ladies all coldly turned their backs upon their countrymen. Let us too, here leave them, and turn away from this celebrated

tree, under the shade of which are displayed so many brilliant costumes, their extravagance exceeded only by their bad taste. May God lighten the burden of ennui which they conceal.

## CHAPTER II.

, A short distance from the "Russian tree," a man of about thirty was seated by a little table of the Café Weber. He was of medium height, of slight but well knit frame, and his handsome and manly face was well bronzed by the sun. Both his hands rested lightly on his cane, and he wore a careless look, as though a stranger to those about him, and perfectly indifferent to their opinion. His large brown eyes glanced expressively over the surrounding scene, now half closing as though dazzled by the sunlight, and now following some eccentric figure, at the sight of which his face would break into a pleasant smile. He wore a coat of German make, and a gray felt hat shaded his broad brow. At the first glance, he seemed an honorable and energetic young man, with not too poor an opinion of himself, such a person as we often meet with in the world. He appeared to be taking a rare hol-

day, and to enjoy the picture before his eyes, the more from its contrast to those scenes with which he had been familiar. He was a Russian : by name Gregory Mikhailovitch\* Litvinof.

We must make the acquaintance of this young man, and as a preliminary step thereto, will glance briefly at the early portion of his life, which had not thus far proved a very eventful one.

His father was a clerk belonging to the mercantile class, and lived in a country town.

His mother was of a noble family, gentle and refined, yet energetic ; she was younger than her husband by twenty years, and exerted all her power and influence to improve his mind and manners. Thanks to her, he began to dress in good taste, and to behave properly ; he stopped swearing, and was respectful to scientific and learned men, though he would not take the trouble to read himself ; he even attempted to walk with a slower step, and to converse in a more subdued tone. Sometimes his former nature would get the upper hand, and he would mutter between his teeth, when some one of

\*It is customary in Russia to connect the father's name with that of the child. Mikhailovitch means Michael's son.

fended him, "How I should like to thrash that fellow!" but would immediately add, "No doubt it is so . . . we must think of the matter." His wife conducted her household affairs after the fashion of Western Europe; she kept her servants at a distance, and would not allow any one to play the glutton at her table. Neither she nor her husband knew how to manage her estate, which had been much neglected, and was of great extent, comprising prairies, woods and a lake, on the shore of which a factory had of late years been built by a gentleman of more energy than prudence. This factory had done well in the hands of a crafty merchant, but had afterward run down under the management of an honest German manufacturer.

Madame Litvinof, however, was satisfied so long as she was not losing money, or running into debt. Unfortunately her health failed her, and she died of consumption, the very year in which her son entered the University of Moscow. Circumstances which will be related in the course of our story, prevented Gregory Litvinof from finishing his university course, and he returned to the country, where he passed some time in idle seclusion. He found that the gentlemen of his neighborhood bore him

no good-will, and they finally caused him to be drafted in the so-called volunteers of 1855. Litvinof barely escaped with his life from an attack of typhus fever in the Crimea, where he was quartered in a mud hut for six months, without seeing a soldier of the Allies; he afterwards filled an elective office in his native province, and finally settled down to the study and practice of agriculture. He perceived that his mother's estate, so badly managed by his father, did not yield a tenth part of the revenue which might be obtained from it; but he also understood that in order to properly direct it himself, he needed study and experience, and to gain these he determined to travel; he spent nearly four years in Mecklenburg, Silesia and at Carlsruhe; he visited Belgium and England, worked hard and made acquaintances. This was no pleasant task to him, but he kept at it faithfully till it was finished, and now, feeling confidence in himself and in the future, and knowing that he could be of service to his neighbors, and perhaps even to his country, he was on his way home, whither he had been called by his father, who was completely demoralized by emancipation, and the changes following in its train. But why does he stop at Baden?

He is at Baden, because he is there awaiting the arrival of his cousin, Tatiana Petrovna Chestof, to whom he is betrothed. He had known her from childhood, and had passed the early summer with her at Dresden, where she resided with her aunt. His love for the young girl had been founded upon deep respect; and as he had finished his preparatory labors, and a new career was opening before him, he had offered himself to her for better or for worse, as the English say. She had accepted him, and he had hurried back to Carlsruhe to pack up his books and papers. But why, you again ask, is he at Baden.

Because Tatiana's aunt, Capitoline Markovna Chestof, an old maid of fifty, very odd in her manners, but kind and self-sacrificing, a free thinker (she read Strauss, but concealed it from her niece), a lover of the people, and hater of the aristocracy, had not been able to resist the temptation of taking one look at the fashionable world, as seen at Baden-Baden. Capitoline Markovna dressed in the plainest manner, and wore her white hair short; she was secretly much troubled with thoughts of luxury and elegance, and therefore took great pleasure in loudly

inveighing against all such vanities. Why then not gratify the old lady's whim?

These facts explain why Litvinof was so contented, and why he glanced about him with so confident an air. His path in life lay clearly before him, free from every obstacle, and he was proud of this happy fortune, which he looked upon as having been carved out by his own honest hands.

### CHAPTER III.

“ Bah ! bah ! bah ! so you are here ! ” cried a shrill voice in his ear, while a heavy hand rested on his shoulder. He raised his head and recognized one of his few Muscovite acquaintances, a certain Bambaef, a good enough fellow, but very shiftless withal. His cheeks and nose had a soft look, as though they had been well boiled, his greasy hair was in disorder, and his whole appearance was flabby in the extreme. Always penniless, and always an enthusiast on one subject or another, Rostislaf Bambaef went about the world without purpose, but certainly not without noise.

“ Well ! this is unexpected,” he continued, opening wide his eyes and pouting his thick lips, above which a thin, dyed moustache was visible, “ here we meet in Baden-Baden ! But what brings you here ? ”

“ I have been here four days.”

“Where do you come from?”

“What difference does that make to you?”

“What difference does it make! But perhaps you are not aware that Goubaref too is here? He arrived yesterday from Heidelberg. Of course you know him?”

“I have heard of him.”

“Is that all? I must introduce you to him at once. The idea of not knowing such a man! But here is my friend Vorochilof. Perhaps you are not acquainted with him? Allow me to introduce you to each other. You are both learned men. Vorochilof here is a phœnix.”

While thus speaking, Bambaef turned toward a fine looking young man, with a fresh and ruddy face, but with a look too sedate for his age. Litvinof rose and bowed to “the phœnix,” who, to judge from the gravity of his countenance, did not seem particularly flattered by this unexpected introduction.

“I said a phœnix, and I did not use too strong a word,” continued Bambaef. “Go to the College of St. Petersburg, and look at the roll of merit. What name occupies the first place? That of Simon Iakovlevitch Vorochilof! But we must visit Goubaref at once. He is a man whom I revere, and I am not the only one. . . .

Every one who can appreciate true merit, reveres him. What a great work he is now writing!"

"On what subject?" asked Litvinof.

"On every subject, my friend. It is a work after the manner of Buckle, but much more profound and comprehensive. Everything will be explained and all questions settled by it."

"Have you read it?"

"Oh! no, I have not read it, in fact what I have told you is a secret that you must not repeat; but then we may expect everything from Goubaref!" Here Bambaeff sighed and crossed his arms. "Ah! if there were only two or three more such heads in Russia! You will find, Gregory Mikhailovitch, that whatever you may have studied in the last few years during which I have lost sight of you, or whatever your convictions now may be, you can learn much from Goubaref. Unfortunately, he is here only for a short time. We must visit him at once. Come on! come on!"

As these words were spoken, a young fop, with curly red hair, wearing a hat ornamented with a sky-blue ribbon, passed by and cast upon Bambaeff a scornful look. Litvinof was provoked.

"Why are you so noisy?" he said. "One would think you were shouting in the chase. But I have not dined yet."

"Indeed," said Bambaef, "then we can all dine together at Weber's. It will be charming. You have money enough to pay for me?" he added in a low tone.

"Yes, but—"

"Oh! no thanks! it will give us great pleasure to pass the hour with you." "Ah!" cried Bambaef suddenly, "the band are playing the finale from *Ernani*. How beautiful! *Oh! som. . . . mo Carlo*. It brings tears to my eyes. Come, Simon Iakovlevitch, let us go."

Vorochilof, who had remained during all this time, standing stiff and motionless, lowered his eyes in a dignified way and muttered something to himself, but did not refuse the proposition; Litvinof also resigned himself to his fate. Bambaef took him by the arm, but before entering the *café*, beckoned to Isabelle, the well-known flower-girl of the Jockey Club, to bring him a bouquet. The aristocratic flower-girl did not stir; she did not care to serve such a shabby customer. On being motioned to by Vorochilof, however, she came forward, when he picked out from her basket a little bunch of violets, at the same

time throwing her a florin. He evidently thought his generosity would surprise her, but it had not the least effect. Vorochilof was elegantly and stylishly dressed, but the experienced eye of the young girl at once detected the absence in him of the true aristocratic air.

After taking their places in the main hall at Weber's and ordering dinner, our friends began to converse. Bambaeff with much warmth, again dilated in a noisy and demonstrative manner upon the great merits of Goubareff; soon, however, he ceased speaking, and began to sigh, as he swallowed glass after glass of wine. Vorochilof ate and drank sparingly, seeming to have but little appetite. Having first questioned Litvinof concerning his work and studies, he began to expatiate upon his own opinions, less in relation to Litvinof's pursuits, than with reference to various "questions," which he himself introduced. Suddenly he began to speak in an excited and rapid manner, with many gestures, emphasizing every syllable, like a graduate delivering an oration at commencement. The further he advanced in his discourse, the more eloquent and enthusiastic he became. No one interrupted him; he seemed to be reading a composition or dissertation. The names of learned contemporaries, the exact dates of

their births and deaths, the titles of their latest works, name after name, glided rapidly from his lips, causing him an inward joy, which his eyes could not conceal. Vorochilof held in contempt all that was old ; he respected only the latest discoveries of science. To quote a work of Dr. Zauerbengel on the Prisons of Pennsylvania, or the article on the Vedas in the last number of the Asiatic Journal (he always said Journal, though he did not understand English) made him very happy. Litvinof listened, without being able to determine what his especial acquirements were. Now he was speaking of the records of the Celtic race in history ; this took him back to ancient times, and he spoke concerning the marbles of Ægina and of Onatas, the predecessor of Phidias, whom he called Jonathan, thus giving his discourse a flavor, half Biblical and half American ; then he suddenly launched into political economy, calling Bastiat a simpleton, of no more real merit than Adam Smith and the rest of the physiocrats."

"Physiocrats ? rather aristocrats !" interposed Bambaef in a low tone. Vorochilof succeeded finally, however, in surprising even Bambaef himself, by speaking of Macaulay as a writer who was behind the age. As to

Gneist and Riehl, he declared they were not worth mentioning, and shrugged his shoulders, which gesture Bambaef hastened to imitate at once.

“He is speaking thus, without any object in view, before strangers in a *café*,” thought Litvinof as he looked upon the violent gestures of his new acquaintance, “and he does not see the absurdity of his position! Poor fellow! he seems very inexperienced.” At last Vorochilof stopped: his voice, which had become as shrill and hoarse as that of a young rooster, was suddenly hushed. Bambaef then recited a few lines of poetry, and again burst into tears, to the great dismay of an English family, sitting at the table on the right, and the amusement of two women of the town, who were dining with an old looking, young man at the table on the left. The waiter brought the bill, and our friends rose from the table.

“Now,” cried Bambaef, springing on a chair, “a cup of coffee, and we are off! These are the kind of men we have in Russia,” he added, as they reached the door, pointing with his coarse, red hand to Vorochilof and Litvinof.

Yes, these are the kind of men we have, thought Litvinof. Vorochilof had already put on his air of

dignity ; he smiled coldly, as he struck his heels together in a military manner.

Five minutes afterward, our three friends arrived at the hotel where Stephen Nicolaevitch Goubaref was stopping.

As they were going up the staircase, they met a lady of commanding appearance, whose face was partly concealed by a short veil. As her glance fell upon Litvinof, she started ; the blood rushed to her face, and then retreating, left it as pale as marble. Litvinof had not noticed her, and she walked rapidly away.

## CHAPTER IV.

As our friends entered the handsomely furnished and well lighted apartments of Goubaref, Bambaef drew Litvinof forward, saying: "Permit me to introduce my friend, Gregory Litvinof, a true Russian and the prince of good fellows." He then added, speaking in a low tone to Litvinof, "this is the man himself, this is Goubaref."

Litvinof looked attentively upon him, but was not particularly impressed by his appearance. Goubaref was a small man, with coarse features, thick neck, long beard, and downcast eyes, dull looking, but with an air of respectability about him. He was dressed in morning gown and slippers, and looking up, on being addressed, smiled and said: "M.n—mm—I am very glad to make your acquaintance"—then turning his back on Litvinof and stroking his beard, he began, according to his habit,

to walk up and down the room with the soft tread of a cat. There were two other persons with him in the room ; the one, a lady with dark complexion, bright and staring eyes, and a slight mustache upon her upper lip, an advocate of the rights of woman ; the other, a strict gentleman, who sat by himself in one corner of the room.

“Now, my dear Matrena Semenovna,” said Goubaref, turning toward this lady, without introducing Litvinof, “go on with what you had begun to tell us.”

This lady, who was known as Madame Soukhantchikof, was a widow without encumbrances or fortune, who had, for the last two years, been carrying her Penates from one country to another. She immediately resumed her narrative with a singular volubility.

“Well, he presented himself before the prince, and said to him : ‘Your Excellency is in a situation to assist me ; I ask you to consider the purity of my motives. Is it possible that, in this country, any one can be persecuted for his honest opinions?’ Now, what do you suppose this prince, this refined and elevated statesman did ?”

“What did he do ?” asked Goubaref, lighting a cigarette with an abstracted air.

The lady straightened up and stretched out her bony hand: "He called his servant and said to him: 'Take off that man's coat, and keep it for yourself: I make you a present of it.'"

"Did the servant take it off?" cried Bambaef, striking his hands together.

"He took it off and kept it. This was done by Prince Barnaoulol, the rich and famous noble, representative of the government, with extraordinary powers. What can we expect after that?"

The angular form of Madame Soukhantchikof trembled with emotion, her face worked nervously, and her eyes seemed starting from their sockets, a danger to which they were always liable, whatever might be the subject of the conversation.

"It is an outrage that cries for vengeance," said Bambaef. "There is no punishment severe enough for him."

"Hm . . . hm . . . They are all corrupt," remarked Goubaref without raising his voice. "We do not want to punish them, but we must take other measures."

"But is this true?" asked Litvinof.

“True?” cried Madame Soukhantchikof. “It is impossible to doubt it.”—She gave the word impossible such energetic emphasis, that she bent herself almost double.—“The most truthful man in the world told me of it. You know him—Stephen Nikolaitch; it was Helistratof Capiton, who was a witness of this disgraceful scene.”

“Which Helistratof?” asked Goubaref. “The one who used to be in Kazan?”

“The same. I know there was a story about, that he had taken bribes from the brandy manufacturers, but who started this story? Pelikanof, whose word no one believes, for it is well known that he is nothing but a spy.”

“Excuse me, Matrena Semenovna,” cried Bambaef, “Pelikanof is a friend of mine, he cannot be a spy.”

“Yes, yes, he is a spy.”

“Excuse me . . . .”

“A spy! a spy!” cried Madame Soukhantchikof.

“No, no! it is not so. You might say it of Tenteleef, perhaps,” muttered Bambaef.

Madame Soukhantchikof stopped for a moment to take breath; Bambaef profited by this opportunity. “I have it from good authority,” he said, “that when he was sent for by the Secret Council, he threw himself at the feet of

Countess Blasenkampf, crying: 'Help me, save me!' Pelikanof has never done anything so mean as that."

"Tenteleef" . . . muttered Goubaref, "I must make a note of that."

Madame Soukhantchikof shrugged her shoulders with inexpressible disdain. "They are both of them bad enough," said she. "I have a still better story though to tell you about Tenteleef. He always has been a terrible tyrant, you know, though he calls himself a friend of emancipation. One day he was in a drawing-room in Paris, when Mrs. Beecher Stowe, the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, you know, entered. Being exceedingly vain, Tenteleef asked the host to present him to Mrs. Stowe. As soon as she heard his name, she rebuked him with these words: 'How dare you show yourself before the author of Uncle Tom! Leave at once!' and she gave him a slap in the face. And what do you think? Tenteleef caught up his hat and ran away."

"That is a little exaggerated, perhaps," said Bambaef. "She told him to leave, there is no doubt of that, but she did not slap him."

"She slapped him, she slapped him in the face!" Madame Soukhantchikof repeated, in convulsive tones. "I am not in the habit of making up my stories So these people are your friends?"

“Excuse me, Matrena Semenovna, I did not say I was intimate with Tenteleef; I was only speaking of Pelikanof.”

“If Tenteleef is not your friend, Mikhneef is, perhaps.”

“What has he done?” asked Bambaef with some anxiety.

“Done? As if you did not know! He said openly, at the corner of Nevski Prospekt and Ascension street, that all the liberals ought to be imprisoned; and when an old comrade, who was very poor, once asked him if he could dine with him, he replied: ‘No, I have invited two counts to dinner to-day; off with you!’”

“Excuse me, but that is not true,” cried Bambaef.

“Not true! not true! In the first place, Prince Vakhrouchine, who also dined with your Mikhneef . . .”

“Prince Vakhrouchine,” interrupted Goubaref in a severe tone, “is my first cousin, though I do not allow him to call on me. We will not talk of him, if you please.”

“In the second place,” continued Madame Soukhantchikof, bowing humbly at Goubaref’s remark, “Prascovia Iakolevna, herself, told me of it.”

“You have given excellent authority. She and Sarkisof are both manufacturers of news.”

“Excuse me, Sarkisof is a liar, that is true; he even stole the pall from his father’s coffin, but there is no comparison between him and Prascovia Iakolevna. Do you remember how nobly she left her husband? But, I know you are always ready . . . .”

“Come, we have had enough of these disputes, Matrena Semenovna,” interrupted Goubaref, “let us occupy ourselves with higher subjects. You know that the sacred fire is always burning where I am. Have you read *Mademoiselle de la Quintinie*? It is an excellent book, and expresses your own ideas!”

“I never read novels now,” replied Madame Soukhantchikof drily.

“Why?”

“Because I think it is a waste of time; I am at present deeply interested in sewing machines.”

“What machines?” asked Litvinof.

“Sewing, sewing machines . . . Every woman must obtain one of these sewing machines, and then they must all form a society; in this way they will soon become perfectly independent. Otherwise they can never gain their freedom. This is a very important social question. We discussed it thoroughly with Boleslas Stadnitzki. He is a great nature, this Stadnitzki, but he treats these subjects too lightly. In fact, he is stupid in regard to them.”

"The time will come, when they will all have to render an account," said Goubaref slowly, in a tone that was partly magisterial and partly prophetic.

"Yes, yes," said Bambaef, "they will have to render an account. Stephen Nicolaevitch," he added in a low voice, "is the work progressing?"

"I am collecting the materials," returned Goubaref with a frown; then turning toward Litvinof, who had begun to grow tired of this crowd of unfamiliar names and this storm of words, he asked: "What are you engaged in now?"

Litvinof satisfied his curiosity.

"Ah! natural science. Mm . . . mm . . . very useful as a discipline for the mind, but of no other value! We have more important work before us now. Will you permit me to ask what your opinions are?"

"My opinions?"

"Yes, your political opinions, I mean."

Litvinof smiled.

"To tell the truth, I have no particular opinions on the subject."

At this reply the stout gentleman seated in the corner suddenly raised his eyes and looked fixedly at Litvinof.

"How can that be?" asked Goubaref, with an air of

affected politeness. "Have you never thought of the subject, or are you tired of it?"

"I think that it is almost too early for us Russians to have many political opinions, or to imagine that we have them. Mind, I do not use the word *political* in its true sense . . . ."

"Ah! yes, you are one of those who do not believe themselves ready for the new order of affairs," said Goubaref in the same tone as before; then approaching Vorochilof, he asked him if he had read the pamphlet which he had lent him.

To Litvinof's surprise, Vorochilof had not uttered a word since they had first entered the room; he had contented himself with frowning and looking about in a dignified manner (he generally either did all the talking or was silent altogether). On being addressed he squared his shoulders with a military air, advanced a step and nodded his head affirmatively.

"Well! were you pleased with it?"

"Yes, so far as concerned his premises, but I could not entirely agree with his conclusions."

"Andrew Ivanovitch praised the pamphlet, in speaking of it to me. You will please state in what particulars you differ from it."

"Are your orders that this shall be done in writing?"

This question seemed greatly to surprise Goubaref; he had not expected it; however, after a moment's reflection, he replied:

“Yes, in writing, and I should also like to have, at the same time, your ideas concerning . . . associations.”

“Do you require them after the method of Lassale or that of Schultze-Delitzsch?”

“Mmm . . . in both ways. Please remember, too, that the financial part of the question is a very important one for us. The workingman’s bank is yet undeveloped. We must study and understand this matter thoroughly. As regards the portion allotted to the peasants . . . ”

“What is your opinion, Stephen Nicolaevitch, on this subject?” asked Vorochilof with respectful delicacy in his tone.

“Mmm . . . The Commune!” said Goubaref with an increase of gravity in his tone, as biting his beard, he directed his lurid and steady gaze upon one of the tables. The Commune . . . you understand, is a great name! What do these incendiary fires mean . . . these measures which the government has taken against Sunday-schools, reading-rooms, and newspapers? What does the refusal of the peasants to sign the papers which close their relations with their former masters mean? What has just happened in Poland? Do you not see whither every-

thing is tending? Do you not see . . . mm . . . that we must now mingle with the people and become acquainted with their ideas?"

Goubaref became excited; his face grew fiery red, and his breath came quick and short; his eyes were still cast down, and he kept biting his beard as he muttered: "Do you not see . . . "

"Evseef is a scoundrel!" suddenly cried Madame Soukhantchikof, to whom Bambaef had been speaking in a low tone, out of consideration for the master of the house. Goubaref turned quickly on his heel, and began to walk up and down the room.

New guests began to arrive, and at a late hour the room was filled. Among the new comers was the M. Evseef, who had been so rudely spoken of by Madame Soukhantchikof a few minutes before. She met him very cordially, and when the party broke up requested him to accompany her home. There was also a certain Pichtchalkin, a model justice of the peace, one of the kind of men that Russia, perhaps, really needs, slightly gifted and informed, indeed, but conscientious, patient, and just. The peasants of his province lauded him to the skies, and he was not wanting in a proper respect for himself.

There were also present a few officers, who were profit-

ing by a short leave of absence to take a pleasure trip through Europe, without, however, forgetting for a moment either their colonel or their own advanced grade; also two students from Heidelberg, one of whom looked about him with a scornful air, while the other laughed convulsively, both seeming to be ill at ease. After them there glided in a small-sized Frenchman, who had a very miserable look; he was in the habit of boasting to his comrades, mostly travelling salesmen, that he was attracting the attention of various Russian countesses; what he wanted mainly now was an invitation to supper. Last of all appeared a certain Titus Bindasof, apparently a rough but good-hearted, convivial fellow, really a cowardly bully, friend of Russian merchants and Parisian lorettes, bald, toothless, and a drunkard. He entered the room flushed and excited, saying that he had left his last cent with that rascal of a Benazet, whereas he had actually just won sixteen florins. It was very curious to witness the respectful manner with which they all surrounded Goubaref: they asked him questions and begged him to answer them; to which he responded by a kind of lowing sound, a turn of the eye, or a few words without sense or connection, which everyone seized upon as an expression of the highest wisdom. He rarely took part in the conversation, but the others did not let it flag. It happened

more than once that three or four were all talking excitedly at the same moment; each one was delighted and perfectly understood the rest. The party lasted till near midnight, and a great number and variety of subjects were discussed. Madame Soukhantchikof spoke of Garibaldi, of a certain Charles Ivanovitch who was flogged by his dependants, of Napoleon III., of the work of woman, of Pleskachef the merchant, who starved a dozen of his workingwomen, and for so doing was awarded a medal with the inscription: "For his usefulness to society," of the proletariat, of the Georgian Prince Tchinktcheoulidzef, who blew his wife from a cannon's mouth, and of the future of Russia. Pichtchalkin also spoke of the future of Russia, of the brandy monopolists, of the significance of nationalities, and of his horror of platitudes. Suddenly, Vorochilof, being no longer able to contain himself, named in one breath at the risk of choking, Draper, Firchow, M. Chelgounof, Bichat, Helmholtz, Starr, Stur, Reiminth, John Muller the physiologist, John Muller the historian, concerning which two he evidently was in some confusion, Taine, Renan, M. Chtchapof, and then Thomas Nash, Peele, Greene,

...

"Who are all these people?" muttered Bambaef, completely overcome.

“They are the predecessors of Shakespeare; they compare with him as the Alps do with Mont Blanc,” replied Vorochilof in a loud tone, and then he also passed to the future of Russia. Bambaef, too, thought it his duty to expatiate on this subject, and painted this future in brilliant colors; Russian music particularly excited his enthusiasm; he found in it something “magnificent,” and in order to illustrate this, attacked a song composed by Varmalof, but was immediately interrupted by the general remark that it was the *Miserere* from *Trovatore*, that he was singing so abominably. Under cover of the confusion, a short officer spoke against the Russian literature, another recited several satirical verses from *L'Etincelle*, a St. Petersburg paper. Titus Bindasof was still more frank: he declared that he would like to break the heads of all those knaves. All were smoking, and the air of the room had become difficult to breathe: all had shouted themselves hoarse, their eyes were blood-shot and their faces covered with perspiration. Bottles of beer were brought in and emptied in a trice. “Where was I?” said one. “With whom was I talking?” asked another; “and what was it about?” In the midst of this tumult, Goubaref was all the time walking and stroking his beard: now he listened for an instant to what was being said, now he dropped a few words as he was pass-

ing by; all present felt that he was not only the host, but also the great personage of the evening.

At ten o'clock, Litvinof, who was suffering from fatigue and headache, quietly slipped from the room, which was now in great confusion. Madame Soukhantchikof had just mentioned another outrage attempted by Prince Barnaoulhof: he had tried to cut off some one's ear. The evening breeze gently fanned his temples and cooled his fevered face. "What kind of a meeting was that?" he thought, as he entered a gloomy path. "Why were they so noisy and excited? What do they want to do?" He shrugged his shoulders, and entering the *Café Weber*, took up the paper and ordered an ice. The paper was full of the Italian question, and the ice seemed execrable. He was about starting for his room, when a stranger approached and saying in Russian that he hoped he was not intruding upon him, took a seat at his table. Litvinof at once recognized him as the gentleman whom he had seen earlier in the evening, sitting so quietly in Goubaref's room; the one who had cast so penetrating a glance upon him when the conversation turned on his political opinions. During the whole evening he had not spoken a word, but now, sitting down by Litvinof, he turned upon him a look of kindness mingled with timidity.

## CHAPTER V.

“I was not introduced to you at the rooms of **M. Goubaref**, where I had the honor to meet you this evening,” said he, “but now, if you will permit me, I will introduce myself. My name is Potoughine; I am a retired officer of the court, having served at St. Petersburg under the Secretary of the Treasury. I hope you do not deem it strange . . . I am not in the habit of making acquaintances in this way . . . but you . . . ”

Here Potoughine stopped short, and asked the waiter for a small glass of *kirchwasser*. “To give me courage,” he added with a smile.

Litvinof looked attentively at this new acquaintance, saying to himself, as he did so: “He is not at all like the others.”

He did, indeed, appear very different from any of those whom Litvinof had met during this eventful evening. He was broad-shouldered and deep-chested and not very tall; his hair was in disorder; his eyes looked out from

under their bushy brows, with an intelligent but somewhat melancholy expression ; his mouth was well shaped ; his teeth were bad ; his Russian nose resembled a potato in its form. His manner was rough and awkward, but he seemed far from being a common-place character. He was carelessly dressed ; his coat hung upon him like a sack, and his necktie was twisted out of place. Litvinof, though surprised, was pleased with this new acquaintance. He understood at once that this was not a man who made friends at hap-hazard. He made a powerful impression on Litvinof ; he inspired him simultaneously with respect, sympathy, and a kind of involuntary compassion.

“I hope I do not intrude upon you,” he repeated, in a subdued and somewhat hoarse voice, which corresponded well with his general appearance.

“No, indeed!” replied Litvinof, “I am very much pleased to meet you.”

“Thank you ! the acquaintance also gives me pleasure. I have often heard you spoken of, and I am acquainted with your work and plans. I need not say that I highly approve of them. I was not surprised to see you so quiet this evening.”

“I thought that you also talked very little, if at all,” responded Litvinof.

Potoughine sighed.

"The others talked too much; I was listening to them. Well," he added after a moment's silence, as he lifted his eyebrows in a comical manner, "how did you like the confusion of tongues at our tower of Babel?"

"You may well call it the confusion of tongues! I constantly wanted to ask those gentlemen what they were making such a clamor about."

Potoughine sighed again.

"The most ludicrous feature of all is that they have so much confidence in themselves. Formerly we should have spoken of them as the blind instruments of some superior power; in these times we must use severer terms. I do not accuse them of wrong, remember; nay, more, they are all, with very few exceptions, excellent people. I have heard, for instance, from good authority, reports concerning Madame Soukhantchikof that do her great credit. She gave everything she possessed in the world to two nieces who were very poor. Even if a desire for notoriety did partly influence her, yet, I must confess, the act was a noble one. I cannot say a word against M. Pichtchalkin; in course of time the peasants of his province will certainly present him with a silver cup, of the shape and size of a watermelon, and although he will reply that he has not merited such an

honor, he most certainly will have done so. Your friend, M. Bambaef, has a heart of gold ; it is true that he resembles the poet Iazikof, who, it is said, writes of the pleasures of wine and idleness, without leaving his work for a moment, or drinking anything but water. Bambaef's enthusiasm has no definite aim, but he is enthusiastic none the less for that. M. Vorochilof also is a worthy gentleman ; like all of his school, he considers science and civilization as having been appointed his aides-de-camp ; he is a great talker, but forgets that he is very young. These people are all good enough, but the trouble is they amount to nothing ; the provisions are of the first quality, but you can not swallow a mouthful of them."

Litvinof listened to Potoughine with redoubled attention. His easy and confident way of speaking showed him to be a master of the art of conversation. He loved to talk and knew how to talk ; but, like a man who feels that he has outgrown all vanity, he always waited until a fit occasion or subject of conversation was presented.

"Yes, yes," he continued in that tone, sad without bitterness, which was peculiar to him, "these facts are very strange. Here is another point which I will ask you to notice. Let ten Englishmen meet together and

they will at once begin to talk about the submarine telegraph, the revenue, the price of cotton, the possibility of tanning ratskins; some subject in fact that is positive and definite. Bring ten Germans together and they will at once enter naturally upon the Schleswig-Holstein question and the unity of Germany. Take ten Frenchmen, and no matter how they may try to avoid it, they will eventually arrive at a discussion of the fair sex. If ten Russians, however, meet together, the conversation immediately turns, as you have noticed this evening, upon the greatness of Russia and her brilliant future, while in tracing her origin they go back to the eggs of Leda. They squeeze, and suck upon and chew this unfortunate subject as boys do india-rubber, . . . and with the same result. They can not touch upon it without alluding to the corruption of the West. The West touches us on all sides, and how terribly corrupt it is! This would not be so bad if we really did despise it; but, no, this is all boasting and falsehood. We cry out against the West and yet cannot live without its approval. I know a middle-aged man, the father of a family, who was driven almost to despair because, being once in a restaurant in Paris, he asked for *a piece of beefsteak with some potatoes*, while a real Frenchman who sat near him cried out: Waiter, steak and potatoes! My

friend was covered with shame and immediately repeated: *Steak and potatoes!* and always afterward told his friends that this was the proper mode of expression."

"Please tell me," said Litvinof, "to what you attribute the undeniable influence that Goubaref exerts over those about him? To his talents or to his acquirements?"

"No, he possesses neither the one nor the other."

"Is it owing to his character, then?"

"No, he has no character, either; he has great force of will, however, and we Slaves, as a general rule, have but little of it. M. Goubaref has taken it into his head to become the head of the party, and has accomplished it. This is owing to our nature. The government has delivered us from slavery, but the customs of slavery have become so impressed upon us that we cannot throw them off at once. In all things and everywhere, we need a master. Generally this master is a living being; sometimes it is a peculiar tendency, as, for instance, the mania for the natural sciences at the present time. Why is this? What causes lead us thus voluntarily to subject ourselves? It is inexplicable, but nevertheless it is true. The most important fact with us is, that we must have a master. We are the true serfs. We are slaves in our pride, as well as in our abasement. As soon as a new

master appears, we leave the old one. To-day it is James, to-morrow Thomas. Quick, make a bow to James, an obeisance to Thomas. We boast of being masters of our opinions, but instead of holding our own, like men, with the sword, we can only strike like servants with the fist, and that only as the master gives his permission. Moreover, we are a susceptible people; it is easy to influence us. This is the reason why M. Goubaref has reached the top of the ladder. He has always struck at the same spot, and has finally succeeded in piercing it. A man who has a good opinion of himself, who has great self-confidence, who gives commands, is the one who is wanted: he must be right, and must be listened to. All our parties are begun thus. The first who seizes the sceptre retains it."

The color gradually deepened in Potoughine's cheeks, and his eyes became more and more bright and expressive; harsh as his words might seem, however, there was no trace of vindictive feeling in them, but simply an expression of true and sincere sadness.

"How did you make Goubaref's acquaintance?" asked Litvinof.

"I have known him for a long time. Your question reminds me of another of our peculiarities. Here is a writer, who has devoted his life to a warfare in prose and

verse against drunkenness and the brandy manufacture; suddenly, one fine day, he buys a couple of distilleries, and supplies a hundred bar-rooms. Anywhere else in the world he would be driven from society; here, not a reproach is heard. M. Goubaref's case is a similar one: he is a lover of the Slavic race, a democrat, a socialist, and everything of that kind, while his property was, and still is, managed by his brother, a noble of the old stamp. And here is Madame Soukhantchikof, who glories in the fact that Mrs. Beecher Stowe slapped Tenteleef, almost prostrating herself before Goubaref, whose whole merit consists in pretending that he has read profound works, and that he appreciates all their wisdom. You could form an opinion yourself this evening, as to what his conversational powers really are. It was fortunate that he did no more than mutter, for when he is in good humor, he tells villainous, little, cynical stories. It is all I can do to keep my patience when our great Goubaref is thus engaged."

"I do not think you seem like a very patient person," said Litvinof. "But allow me to inquire your given name."

Potoughine drank a little *kirschwasser*.

"My name is Sozonthe Ivanovitch. This delightful name was given me after one of my relations, an abbot,

to whom, however, I owe nothing else. I am, if I may so say, of a priestly race. As regards my patience, you do wrong to doubt it; I have served for twenty-two years under my uncle, the Secretary of State, Irinarche Potoughine. Did you ever know him?"

"No."

"I must congratulate you on it. Yes, I am very patient. But let us return to our first point, as my respectable brother, the high priest Avvakoum, who was burned under the Czar Theodore, used to say. I can take back nothing, sir, of what I have said, concerning our countrymen. They are constantly complaining and going about with long faces, and yet are always full of hope. Look at these lovers of the Slavic race, of whom M. Goubaref is one: they are very worthy people, but you always find in them this strange mixture of despair and confidence, and they live only in the word 'future.' They hope for all things, but nothing comes to them, and during ten whole centuries, Russia has originated nothing in government, the arts and sciences, or even in manufactures. But you must be patient, it is all coming in the future. If I ask how it will come, I am answered: That we, who are civilized, are good for nothing, while the people . . . oh! the people are great. It will come

through the armiak.\* All other idols are destroyed, we must trust in the armiak. But suppose the armiak does not prove equal to your hopes? It surely will; read Madame Kokhanofksa and you will no longer doubt! If I were an artist, I would draw the following picture: a civilized man standing before a peasant, bowing low and saying: "Cure me, my friend, I am sick unto death;" the peasant, on the other hand, humbly bowing to the man of civilization, and saying: "Instruct me, my lord, I am perishing for want of light." Neither of them, of course, budges an inch. Now, what is necessary, is to have true resignation and humility, not merely the words for them; we must frankly and fairly borrow what our older brothers have invented long before us. *Kellner, noch ein Glässchen Kirsch!* I hope you will not think me intemperate, but the liquor seems to loosen my tongue."

"After what you have said," remarked Litvinof with a smile, "I do not need to ask to what party you belong, or what your opinion is of Europe."

Potoughine threw back his head.

"I admire, and feel extremely indebted to Europe, and do not think it necessary to conceal my opinions. For a long time . . . no, for a short time only, I have not been

\* The principal garment of the serfs.

afraid to express my convictions, just as I saw you did not hesitate to make yours known to M. Goubaref. I have ceased, thank Heaven, trying to assimilate my opinions with those of the person with whom I am talking. In fact, I know of nothing worse than this useless pusillanimity, this cowardly complaisance, which makes the statesman cringe before the first student that he meets, though he really despises him with all his heart. He is thus deceitful from his desire to be popular, but we ordinary mortals do not need to take this course. Yes, I love Europe, or to speak more exactly, I love civilization, that civilization which is so much despised by us; I love it and trust it, and will have no other love, no other faith. This one word civ-il-i-za-tion is perfect, immaculate and sacred, while all others of the kind, nationality, glory—are soiled with the stain of blood."

"Do you love Russia, your country, Sozon the Ivano-vitch?"

"I love it passionately . . . and I too hate it."

Litvinof shrugged his shoulders.

"That is trite and commonplace," he answered.

"Indeed! Does that trouble you? Commonplace! I know many excellent commonplaces. 'Order and liberty,' there is an immortal commonplace for you. Or do you prefer to have, as we do, 'Anarchy and Hier-

archy?' Then we have all those phrases which so tickle the youthful fancy, the contemptible burgher class, the sovereignty of the people, the rights of labor. As regards love and hate . . . ”

“Byronism,” said Litvinof, “the romanticism of 1830!”

“You are mistaken; the first one to call attention to this mingling of opposed feelings, was the Roman poet Catullus, who flourished some two thousand years ago.\*

I borrowed from him, for I know a little Latin, in consequence, if I may so speak, of my priestly origin. Yes, I adore and abhor Russia, my great, wonderful, hateful and yet cherished country. I have just left it, for I feel the need of a little rest after twelve years passed constantly at the desk; I have left Russia and find it very pleasant where I am; but I shall soon return again, I know. A civilized land is pleasant, but a wild nature does not prosper in it.”

“You say you find it pleasant here: it seems so too, to me,” said Litvinof. “I came here to learn, but that does not prevent me from observing some sad things . . .” As he spoke thus, he pointed out two lorettes, with whom

\* Odi et amo. Quare id faciam, fortasse requiris.

Nescio: sed fieri sentio et excrucior.

*Catull.*, LXXXVI.

two members of the Jockey Club were whispering, and also the gambling hall, which was still crowded, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour.

“What! I hope you do not think that I am blind to this,” quickly answered Potoughine. “Only, if you will pardon me, I must say that your remark reminds me of the triumphant tirades of our unfortunate journalists, during the Crimean war, over the numerous blunders in the management of the English army, as denounced by the *Times*. I am not an optimist; the whole of life, this comedy with a tragic ending, does not appear to me rose-colored; but why hold the West alone responsible for what is after all, perhaps, a common weakness? This gambling-hall is disgusting, it is true, but are our Greeks, our native thieves, much better? No, my dear Gregory Mikhailovitch, let us be more humble and less severe. A good pupil can recognize his master’s faults, but he is respectfully silent concerning them, for these very faults are useful to him and teach him a salutary lesson. If you still persist in holding up to view the corruption of the West, look at Prince Coco, who is just now passing over there so rapidly; he has probably just wasted at the gambling table the rent which a hundred poor families have collected by hard labor; his nerves are now pleasantly excited. I saw him

this morning at Marx's, looking over a pamphlet by Veulliot. . . . He is a delightful speaker."

"Excuse me," said Litvinof hurriedly, seeing Potoughine rise, "but I am very slightly acquainted with Prince Coco, and much prefer to hear you talk. . . ."

"I am greatly obliged to you," replied Potoughine with a bow; "but I have been talking a long time with you, or rather have been talking by myself, and, as you have perhaps noticed, a man is sometimes a little ashamed of his eloquence when it elicits no reply. I think this is enough for our first meeting. Good evening. I must say again that I am very glad to have made your acquaintance."

"But wait a moment, Sozonthe Ivanovitch; I do not yet know where you are stopping, nor how long you intend to stay here."

Potoughine replied with visible embarrassment: "I expect to remain a week at Baden; we will meet at Weber's or at Marx's . . . or I can call on you if you wish."

"I shall be glad to have you do so, but should also like your address."

"Yes; but there are reasons . . . I have some one with me."

"What! are you married?"

"Of course not. How can you ask so absurd a question? No . . . I have a young girl with me."

"Oh!" said Litvinof, "excuse me."

"She is only six years old," added Potoughine. She is an orphan . . . daughter of a lady . . . one of my dearest friends. We had better meet each other here. Good night."

So saying, he threw on his hat, and walked hurriedly away, toward the *Allée Lichtenthal*.

"An odd person," thought Litvinof, as he turned toward his hotel, "I must find him again."

On entering his room he saw a letter on the table. "It is from Tania," he cried joyfully; but his guess was wrong, for it proved to be from his father in the country. Litvinof broke the thick seal, and had already opened the letter, when he suddenly became conscious of a very penetrating and pleasant perfume, which seemed familiar to him; he turned quickly round, and saw in a glass upon the window-sill, a bouquet of heliotropes. He walked up to it, touched it, smelt it. It recalled to his mind some vague and pleasant impression of the past . . . but what was it? he could not tell. He rang for the waiter, and asked who brought the flowers there. The waiter answered that they had been left by a lady, who had refused to give her name, saying that *Herr*

*Zluitenhof* would know by the flowers themselves, whence they came. Again the vague idea floated in his mind. . . . He asked the waiter to describe the lady. She was tall, elegantly dressed, and wore a short veil.

“She must have been a Russian countess,” he added.

“Why do you think so?”

“Because she gave me two florins.”

Litvinof dismissed him, and stood for a long time before the window, absorbed in thought. Finally making an impatient gesture as though he could not solve the difficulty, he again took up his father’s letter. It contained the usual complaints; assured him that his wheat would not bring any price; that the peasants would no longer obey him, and that the end of the world was undoubtedly near at hand. “Just think,” said he, “among other troubles, my coachman has been bewitched. He would certainly have died, if I had not followed the advice of some good people, and sent him to a priest, at Rezan, celebrated for his remedies against witchcraft. He has entirely cured him, as you will see by reading the enclosed paper.” Litvinof looked through this document with much curiosity. It ran thus:

“Nicanor Dmitrief was attacked by a disease which medicine could not cure; some evil disposed persons had bewitched him, for reasons which he himself has given

me; he had made and broken a promise of marriage to a young girl, who had thereupon besought certain persons to bewitch him, and if I had not come to his assistance, he would certainly have perished; but happily trusting in God, I succeeded in saving him. I know not how this was done; it is a mystery. I however beseech your Highness to forbid this young woman from repeating her attempt; otherwise Nicanor may again suffer from her malice."

Litvinof pondered long over this letter, which recalled to his mind so strongly the dreary solitude of the steppes, and the dull and lonely life which is led upon them, and Baden seemed to his mind the very place where such a letter should be read, in order to appreciate its full power.

It was now long past midnight, and Litvinof retired to bed, but not to sleep; all the faces he had seen, and the discussions he had heard, seemed to go and come before his bewildered mind. Now, he heard the lowing sound of Goubaref's voice, and saw his fierce eyes fixed upon him; now the eyes changed their expression, and Madame Soukhantchikof seemed staring at him, while her sharp voice kept repeating: "She slapped him, she slapped him in the face!" then he saw the striking features of Potoughine, and heard his words of wit and wis-

dom ; then Vorochilof sprang up suddenly, like a jack-in-a-box, before him ; then Pichtchalkin gravely shook his head, and Bindasof talked loud and swore ; and then appeared Bambaef melted into tears . . . and through all these changing visions, stole this sweet, heavy, peculiar odor, which would not let him sleep, and which constantly brought before him that something which he could not recall. . . . He remembered he had heard that it was hurtful to sleep in a room where flowers were, and groped through the darkness to the bouquet, and placed it in the next room ; but still the heavy perfume reached his pillow, even gliding through the sheets which he wrapped about his head, and causing him to toss restlessly from side to side. He became at last a prey to violent delirium ; already the priest, “celebrated for his remedies against witchcraft,” had twice appeared before him, in the form of an immense hare with a long beard and stubby tail, and Vorochilof, changed to a nightingale, had perched near him on a gorgeous military plume, sounding his tuneful notes, when suddenly springing up in bed, and striking his hands together, he cried aloud : “Can *she* have left it ? it is impossible !”

But in order to explain this cry of Litvinof, we must ask the reader to go back with us, and review some of the events of a few preceding years.

## CHAPTER VI.

In 1850, there lived at Moscow, in an almost destitute condition, the numerous family of the Princes Osinine. They were not Tartars nor Georgians, but true Russian princes, descended from Rurik, by the direct and legitimate male line. Their name is frequently met with in our history, in the times of the first great princes of Moscow. They had owned vast possessions, had more than once had lands bestowed upon them as a reward of valor, and had sat in the councils of the Bojars; but having been maliciously accused of sorcery, they fell into disgrace, were mercilessly ruined, deprived of all their titles and honors, exiled, and the house of Osinine once overthrown, nothing could ever again restore it to its former glory. In course of time its confiscated estates and family possessions at Moscow were returned to it, but impoverished and worn out, it was unable to uplift itself either under Peter I. or Catherine II., and constantly losing ground, already counted among its members family stew-

ards, revenue detectives and police officers. The family with which we have to deal, was composed of father, mother and five children. They lived in a small frame house of one story, having steps in front painted in two colors, ornamented with green lions over the door, and displaying other evidences of a gentleman's taste. It was with great difficulty, however, that they were able each year to make both ends meet, even when they bought on credit of the grocer, and passed the whole winter without light or fire. The prince was of a feeble and shallow nature; in his youth he had been a dandy and leader of fashion; now he was completely used up. Less out of consideration for his name, than through regard for his wife, who had formerly been a maid of honor at the court, he had been provided with a sinecure. He took no part, however, either in politics or business, but passed his time, wrapped in a dressing-gown, smoking and sighing. The princess was a sad and sickly woman, entirely devoted to the care of her household, the placing of her children in government institutions, and the preserving of her relations with her St. Petersburg friends. She had never become reconciled to her position, and her separation from the court. Litvinof's father had become acquainted with this family when he lived in Moscow, had shown them some kindness, and once had lent them

three hundred roubles. His son, when a student, living near, visited them very often; not, however, on account of their being neighbors, nor because of the comforts and allurements of their home. The truth was, he had fallen in love with their oldest daughter, Irene.

Irene had arrived at the age of seventeen, and had just left the Institute where she had been studying, on account of a quarrel between her mother and the lady principal. Irene had been selected to recite at a public entertainment, a French poem complimentary to the commissioner of education, when, at the last moment, another young lady, daughter of a wealthy brandy merchant, had been chosen in her place. The princess could not brook the insult, and Irene, herself, was not able to pardon this display of partiality. She had, for a long time, thought how she would rise, and all eyes being fixed upon her, would recite her poem, and how all Moscow would then talk of her success. In fact, Irene would probably have made a great sensation. She was tall and well formed, though somewhat narrow chested; her complexion was clear as porcelain and her cheeks were tinged with a rosy flush, such as is rarely seen at her age; her thick tresses were of a golden hue, shading into brown; and her beautiful and regular features had not yet lost that expression of childish innocence which belongs to early youth. 'The

careless bend of her handsome neck, and her languishing and somewhat abstracted smile, indicated a nervous temperament, while her thin lips, and well proportioned aquiline nose, betrayed will and passion, a something which might prove dangerous to others, and to herself as well. Her deep gray eyes, veiled beneath lashes as long and shining as those of an Egyptian goddess, and arched by high and delicately penciled brows, were truly fascinating. These eyes had a strange and mysterious expression; they seemed to gaze into the far distance, with a fixed and wistful look. At the Institute, Irene was looked upon as a student of great ability, but of a wayward and wilful disposition. One of her teachers warned her that she would be ruined by her passions, while another reproached her for her icy coldness, and spoke of her as a heartless girl. Her comrades thought her proud and haughty, her brothers and sisters feared her; her mother had no confidence in her, and her father always felt ill at ease when she fixed upon him her mysterious gaze. Notwithstanding, she inspired her parents with an involuntary feeling of respect, not on account of her abilities, but from some undefined hope in the future which she had awakened in their breasts.

“ You will find Prascovie Danilovna,” once said the old prince, dropping for a moment his pipe, “ You will

find that Irinka will some day draw us from the mire."

The princess was angry for a moment, and told her husband that he used "very low expressions," but soon talking to herself, she muttered: "Yes . . . it would be pleasant to be drawn from the mire."

Irene enjoyed almost unlimited freedom in her father's house; she was not spoiled, but rather avoided, and no one thought of troubling her with work. This was exactly what she desired. Sometimes when a very humiliating scene took place, when some merchant came, saying that he was tired of trying to collect his bill, and that he should now proceed to make trouble for them, Irene would sit quietly in her place without even a frown, but a sneering smile would pass over her face, which to her parents was more bitter than any reproach. They felt guilty, helplessly guilty before this girl, who seemed born to wealth, luxury and position.

Litvinof fell in love with Irene at first sight (he was only three years her senior). For a long time, however, he could not gain her sympathy, nor even attract her attention. She acted as though he had offended her, and she could not make up her mind to pardon the affront. He was then too young and inexperienced to understand what feelings this apparent anger and haughty coldness might conceal. Often forgetting his lessons

and his books, he would sit by the hour in the shabby drawing-room of Prince Osinine, casting side glances at Irene, his heart filled with a dull and heavy sadness, while she, as though tired and provoked, would rise and walk the room, shrugging her shoulders, folding her arms, and now and then looking carelessly at him as though he were a table or a chair. If, during the evening, she happened to speak to Litvinof, she would not look at him; and finally, taking up a book, and fixing her eyes upon it, she would frown and bite her lips; then, suddenly looking up, would ask her father, or her brother, what was the German word for . . . patience. Litvinof endeavored to tear himself from the enchantment of this circle, in which he vainly struggled, like a bird taken in a net. He left Moscow for a week. The result was, that becoming almost crazed with sorrow and despair, he returned again, pale and wan, to the Osinine's house. By a strange coincidence, Irene had grown thin during his absence; her complexion had lost its clearness, and her cheeks looked hollow. She received him, however, with an increase of coldness, as though she took a malicious pleasure in making him believe that he had now increased the mysterious wrong by which he had offended her. She thus tormented him for two months, when suddenly everything was changed; her love was kindled into a

bright flame and seemed to melt down everything before it. One day—a day that he will never forget—he was seated by a window in the drawing-room, looking absently into the street; his heart was sad; he despised himself and yet was not able to leave the place. If a river had been running beneath the window, he could have plunged headlong into it, with horror, but without regret. Irene sat a little distance from him, motionless and silent. For several days she had not spoken a word either to him or any one else about her; she sat quietly, her arms folded, wholly indifferent to everything going on in the house, and looking about her with her strange gaze. This torture at last became unbearable; Litvinof rose, and without any formal leave-taking, took up his hat. “Stay,” suddenly said Irene in a gentle voice. Litvinof trembled; he did not, at first, recognize her voice: it had changed its tone in uttering that single word. He raised his head and stood speechless. Irene cast upon him a kind glance. “Stay,” she said again, “do not go away. I wish to talk with you.” Then, in a still lower tone, she added: “Please stay, for my sake.” Not understanding her, not knowing what he did, he walked toward her, holding out his hand; with a smile, she took it in both hers, then suddenly rose, and still smiling on him, left the room. In a few minutes she

returned with her younger sister, again cast a lingering glance upon him, and made him sit down at her side. At first she did not speak, but simply sighed, while a deep blush suffused her face; at last, taking courage, she questioned him about his studies, a token of interest which she had never exhibited before. In the evening, she several times asked him to forgive her previous coldness, assured him that her feelings had entirely changed, surprised him by republican speeches (at this time he revered Robespierre and dared not altogether condemn Marat), and before the week had passed, he knew that he was loved. No, he will never forget that first day, nor those few days that followed, when still doubting and trembling lest this happiness might yet prove unreal, he saw her love grow and strengthen day by day. Then came those fleeting and ecstatic moments of first love which never can and never should return in all the remaining years of life. Irene suddenly manifested a gentle and yielding disposition, and an almost perfect evenness of temper. She began to give her younger sisters lessons, not on the piano—she was no musician—but in French and English. She read with them, helped with the housework, and was interested and amused with everything about her. Sometimes she chatted like a little magpie, sometimes was buried in deep meditation.

She laid a thousand plans as to what she would do when she married Litvinof (they never entertained the least doubt of the accomplishment of this fact). "We will work together," whispered Litvinof to her. "Yes, we will work," she answered, "and we will read . . . but better than all, we will travel." She wished above all else, to leave Moscow as soon as possible, and when Litvinof remarked that he had not yet finished his course at the University, she replied after thinking a moment, **that** he could finish it at Berlin . . . or some other place. Irene took no pains to conceal her attachment for Litvinof, so that it soon became known to the prince and princess. They were not particularly delighted by it, but considering the circumstances, they did not consider it necessary to, at once, oppose it. Litvinof had some property. "But the family, the family!" said the princess. "True," replied the prince, "but the family is not a vulgar one, and you know Irene will not listen to us. Did she ever do what we wished her to? You know how headstrong she is. Besides they are not formally engaged."

So argued the prince, but mentally he added, "Only Madame Litvinof! I expected something better than that."

Irene had obtained a complete ascendancy over Lit-

vinof, without the least opposition on his part, it must be confessed. An unknown current drifted him on, without his knowing or caring whither it carried him. What are the duties of married life? Could he be a good husband to Irene, while so entirely subject to her will? What elements of happiness did her character offer him? These were questions which he could not dwell upon one moment. His blood was like fire in his veins. He cared for but one thing—to be near her, with her, now and always. Beyond this nothing was real to him.

In course of time, however, notwithstanding the devotion of Litvinof and the passionate tenderness of Irene, little misunderstandings arose, and petty quarrels occurred. Once he ran over directly from the University in an old coat and with inky hands. She hurried forward as usual to meet him, but stopped suddenly.

“ You have no gloves on,” said she, emphasizing each word. “ Fie! how shabby you do look! ”

“ You are too particular,” answered Litvinof.

“ You are very shabby,” she repeated. “ You are not neat.”

And turning on her heel, she left the room. It is true that, an hour afterward, she implored his forgiveness. She was usually willing to acknowledge her wrong doings, only she often accused herself of imaginary faults, and

stoutly contested those that she really had. Once he found her in tears, her face hidden in her hands, her hair falling on her shoulders. He sprang impetuously toward her, asking the cause of her sorrow. She answered by pointing toward her breast. Litvinof trembled. She is consumptive, was his thought.

“Are you sick?” he asked with a trembling voice.  
“I will run for the doctor . . . .”

Irene did not let him finish, but impatiently stamped her foot.

“I am not sick at all,” she said. “But this dress. . . . do you understand?”

“This dress . . . . I do not see . . . .”

“How stupid! Do you not see that it is old and ugly, and that I have to wear it every day, even when you are here? . . . . It will all end in your not loving me.”

“Why, Irene, how can you talk so? This dress is charming. It is the more dear to me because you wore it the first time I saw you.”

Irene colored with vexation.

“Do not remind me again, I beg of you, Gregory Mikhailovitch, that I have had this dress as long as that.”

“But I assure you, Irene Pavlovna, that the dress looks well on you.”

"No, it does not! It is frightful and horrid," she cried, nervously pulling her long and silky tresses. "Oh, how poor and miserable we are! Cannot something be done to help us?"

Litvinof knew not how to answer her, and was moving slowly away, when suddenly Irene sprang from her chair, placed both her hands upon his shoulders, and, looking up into his face with eyes sparkling with happiness, though still wet with tears, said:

"But you love me, darling, do you not, even in this ugly dress?"

Litvinof fell at her feet.

"Ah!" she murmured, "only love me, love me, darling!"

And so the days and weeks sped swiftly by. There was no formal engagement made, Litvinof having yielded to Irene's desire that it should be delayed a little, because, as she said, they were both so young. Their future union, however, seemed assured, when an event happened by which all their plans were dissipated, **as the dust is scattered before the wind.**

## CHAPTER VII.

The Court visited Moscow during this winter, the events of which we are relating. There was one constant round of gayety and pleasure, closing with the usual grand ball of the nobility. The announcement of this ball was carried by a sheet of the *Police Gazette*, even to the little house of the Osinine family. The prince was the first to act upon it; he at once declared that they must attend the ball and take Irene, that it would be unpardonable to allow such an opportunity of meeting the Court to escape them, and that it was their duty to be present as members of the old nobility. He insisted on this with a warmth which was very unusual in him. The princess in the main agreed with him, being troubled only by the thought of the expense; but Irene positively opposed the plan. "There is no use in talking, I will not go," was her reply to all the arguments of her parents. Her obstinacy was so great that the old prince determined to ask Litvinof to try to persuade her, to make her un-

derstand, among other "reasons," that it was not proper for a young lady to shun society, that now she did not go out at all, and it was her duty to make this first trial. Litvinof undertook to explain these "reasons" to her. On making them known, Irene looked at him steadily until he dropped his eyes; then, toying with the ends of her sash, she quietly asked: "Are you the one who wishes this?" "Yes, I suppose so," stammered Litvinof. "I agree with your father. . . . Why should you not go to see the world, and be seen?" he added with an ingenuous smile.

"To be seen," she repeated slowly. "Very well, I will go; only do not forget that you requested it."

"Yes, but I——"

She quickly interrupted him: "Yes, you requested it. And now you must promise me that you will not go to the ball."

"Why?"

"Because I wish it."

Litvinof unwillingly made a sign of assent.

"I promise, . . . but I must confess that it would be very pleasant for me to see you in your fine array, and to witness the sensation you will surely make." "How proud I should be of you!" he added with a sigh.

Irene smiled.

“ All the fine array will be a white dress, and as regards the sensation . . . Well it makes no difference, I do not wish you to go.”

“ Irene, are you angry with me?”

She smiled again.

“ No I am not angry, only you . . .” And she fastened her eyes upon him with what seemed to him a new and strange expression.

“ It must be fate,” she added in a low tone.

“ But, Irene, you love me?”

“ I love you,” she answered in a solemn tone, at the same time strongly pressing his hand.

The few following days were devoted entirely to preparing for the great event; on the evening of the day before the ball, Irene was ill at ease; she could not remain quiet a moment and twice stole away and cried. Before Litvinof she always wore the same constrained smile; otherwise she was kind to him as usual, but absent-minded and often looking in the glass. On the day of the ball, she was pale and calm. At nine in the evening Litvinof called to see her. When she entered the drawing-room, robed in white tarletan, with a wreath of delicate blue flowers in her hair, he could not suppress an exclamation of surprise, so beautiful and queenly did she appear to him.

“She has grown stately since morning,” thought he, “and what perfect grace! This comes from her noble blood.”

Irene stood before him, seemingly unconscious of his admiration, having her eyes fixed, not upon him, but on something in the far distance, straight before her.

“You look like a fairy queen, or rather like a general before battle and victory,” said Litvinof. . . . “You will not allow me to go to the ball,” continued he while she still stood motionless, seeming to be listening to a voice from within rather than to his words. . . . “But you will not refuse these flowers which I have brought you?”

So saying, he presented her a bouquet of heliotropes.

She cast a quick glance on Litvinof, raised her hand and seizing the flowers wreathed in her fair hair, said:

“Shall I? only say the word, and I will tear this off, and remain at home.”

Litvinof’s heart beat quickly; Irene had already begun to detach the wreath.

“No, no, why should you?” he cried, hurriedly. “I am not selfish, and would not keep you, when I know that your heart . . .”

“Then do not touch me—you will wrinkle my dress,” she cried, stepping quickly backward.

Litvinof was confused and troubled. "You will take my bouquet?" he asked.

"Certainly; it is beautiful, and I dearly love the perfume of these flowers. Thank you! I will keep it as a memento. . . ."

"Of your first ball and your first triumph."

Irene stood on tiptoe and looked into the glass over Litvinof's shoulder. "Am I truly so beautiful? Are you not flattering me?" said she.

Litvinof at once began to pour forth her praises, but Irene was no longer listening. Holding the bouquet against her face, she was again looking into the far distance with those strange eyes, which seemed to expand and fill with shadows as she gazed.

The prince now appeared, wearing a well-worn black coat and a white cravat, with the medal of his rank fastened in his button-hole by a ribbon of St. Vladimir; behind him was the princess, in a dress of Chinese silk, cut in the fashion of the olden time. With that officious anxiety which mothers sometimes affect in order to conceal their feelings, she began to arrange her daughter's dress, without, however, at all improving its appearance.

The wheels of a hired carriage, drawn by two rough-coated old hacks, were now heard grinding on the snow

before the door. A very small footman, who was almost swallowed up in an ill-assorted livery, ran in from the hall, and in a desperate tone announced that the carriage was ready. After giving their blessing to the children who remained at home, the prince and princess, wrapt in their cloaks, went out upon the steps; Irene silently followed them, half covered by an ugly little cloak, which she detested. While escorting her to the carriage, Litvinof hoped, at least, to receive a glance from her; but she got in and took her seat without condescending to even turn her head.

Toward midnight Litvinof passed beneath the windows of the ball-room. The red curtains were closely drawn, but the shining of innumerable candles flooded the whole square with light, while afar off he could hear the joyous strains of the Strauss waltzes.

The next day, at one o'clock, Litvinof called as usual at the house. He found no one in except the prince, who told him that Irene had a bad headache, and would not probably get up before evening, adding that this was not to be wondered at, after her first ball.

“It is a very common thing with young ladies, you know,” he continued in French, to the surprise of Litvinof, who now noticed for the first time that the prince did not have on his dressing-gown as usual, but his coat

"It is the more natural too that she should be sick, after the occurrences of last night."

"What occurrences?"

"Oh! great events, I can tell you. You can not imagine, Gregory Mikhailovitch, what a triumph she had. The whole court noticed her. Prince Alexander Feodorovitch said that Moscow was no place for her, and that she reminded him of the Countess of Devonshire, so celebrated, you know! The old Count Blasenkrampf openly declared that Irene was queen of the ball, and requested to be presented to her; he was also presented to me—that is, he said he remembered having met me when a hussar, and asked me where I was now on duty. The Count is a very entertaining man, and a great admirer of the fair sex. Even the princess was not left alone for a moment; Nathalie Nikitichna, herself, talked with her for a long time. Irene danced with the best of the gentlemen, so many of them that I lost the count. Just imagine; we were the centre of a circle; when the mazurka commenced, every one wished to engage Irene. A foreign ambassador, learning that she lived here, said to the Emperor: 'Sire, Moscow is decidedly the centre of your empire!' Another ambassador said: 'Sire, this is truly a revolution,—revolution or revelation. . . . something of that kind. Yes, it was a very remarkable evening, I assure you.'

“But Irene Pavlovna,” asked Litvinof, who felt his blood chill while the prince was talking, “was she amused, did she seem contented?”

“Of course, she was amused, she could not help it. As to her being contented, she is very hard to understand, you know. Everybody said last night: ‘How surprising! we cannot believe that this is your daughter’s first ball.’ Among others, there was Count Reuzenbach; of course you know him?”

“No, I do not know him, nor have I ever seen him.”

“He is my wife’s cousin.”

“I do not know him.”

“He is very rich, a chamberlain; he lives at St. Petersburg, and is a very noted man; in Livonia he takes the lead in everything. Up to the present time, he has taken very little notice of us. I do not lay up anything against him on that account. I am not easily offended you know. Well, Count Reuzenbach sat down by Irene, talked with her about fifteen minutes, and then said to the princess: ‘Cousin, your daughter is a pearl; she is perfect; everybody congratulates me on having such a niece.’ After that, I saw him approach a person of very high rank, speak to him without taking his eyes from Irene, and this person then looked at her. . . .”

"Then Irene Pavlovna cannot be seen to-day?" again asked Litvinof.

"No; she has a bad headache. She requested me to speak to you and thank you for your bouquet, which every one admired. She needs rest. The princess has gone to make some calls, and I also. . . ." The prince coughed, not knowing how to finish his speech.

Litvinof said that he would not trouble him longer, but would call again in the evening, took up his hat and went away.

A few steps from the house, he saw an elegant coupé stop before a watch-box, in which was stationed an officer of the police. A footman in rich livery, carelessly leaned forward and asked the officer where Prince Paul Vasilievitch Osinine lived. Litvinof looked into the carriage as he passed. It was occupied by a man of about fifty, with a florid and wrinkled face, a straight nose and sinister looking lips; he was wrapped in a beaver ~~cloak~~ and seemed a person of very high rank.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Litvinof did not call in the evening as he had promised; he waited until the next day at noon. On entering the drawing-room, which was so familiar to him, he found there only the two little girls, Victorine and Cleopatra. He kissed them, and asked if Irene Pavlovna was better, and if he could now see her.

“Irinochka has gone out with mamma,” answered Victorine, who was the bolder of the two.

“What! gone out!” said Litvinof, with a new trembling of the heart. “Is not this the time when she generally is with you, when she is giving you your lessons?”

“Irinochka is not going to give us any more lessons,” answered Victorine.

“She is not going to give us any more,” repeated Cleopatra.

“Is your father at home?” asked Litvinof.

“Papa is not at home, and Irinochka is sick ; she was crying all night.”

“She was crying ?”

“Yes, Egorovna told me so, and her eyes are very red and swollen.”

Litvinof walked up and down the room, shivering as with cold, then abruptly left, and went slowly home. He felt as though he were standing on some dizzy height and looking into the depths below. A giddiness seized him, a thousand petty thoughts seemed swarming through his brain ; he felt a stupid surprise, a confused fear. His throat was dry, his tears would not flow. A sickly smile was on his face, and vain and piteous cries came from his lips. Oh ! how sad and cruel was this scene ! “Irene will not see me,” he said again and again, “but why ? What can have happened at that fatal ball ? Can anything change so suddenly ?” (Men see death come suddenly every day, and yet never take to heart its solemn lesson.) “Why will she not see me, why not explain this trouble to me ?”

“Gregory Mikhailovitch,” said a voice at his side.

Litvinof started ; his servant stood before him with a letter in his hand. He recognized the writing ; it was Irene’s. Before opening the letter, with a presentiment of evil, he bent his head and stood firmly, as though

waiting for a blow. At last taking courage, he tore open the envelope. On a small sheet of paper were traced the following words:

“Forgive me, Gregory Mikhailovitch. All is ended between us; I am going to St. Petersburg. I am broken down with grief, but cannot help myself. Doubtless this is my fate. . . . But I will not try to justify myself. My presentiments are realized. Forgive me and forget me; I am not worthy of you. Be generous; do not try to see me.”

IRENE.

Litvinof read these lines and fell back upon his divan, as though struck down by an invisible hand. He let the note slip from his fingers, picked it up again, read it the second time, murmured: “to St. Petersburg,” and again let it fall upon the floor. The calmness of despair seemed to settle upon him; he raised his hands slowly, and carefully arranged the cushions behind his head. “Those who are wounded unto death are thus calm,” he thought. “She came like a vision and she has disappeared like one. . . . It is very natural; I expected it.” (He deceived himself, he had never dreamt of such a thing.) “She did not love me. Her character explains it all. How truly she says, she is not worthy of me!” He smiled bitterly. “She did not know her own worth; after learning it at the ball, why should she any longer think of a poor student like me? . . . I can easily understand it all.”

But when he thought of her tender words, of her smiles, of her loving eyes, those eyes which glowed with love and happiness when meeting his; when he thought of the one kiss which he had stolen from her lips, he burst into a wild and uncontrollable fit of passion; he turned, panting, and fiercely beat his head against the wall, and at last, throwing himself down upon the divan, he buried his purple face in the cushions, and bit them again and again in his blind fury.

The gentleman whom Litvinof had seen in the coupé the day before, was the cousin of Princess Osinine, the rich chamberlain, Count Reuzenbach. Struck with the impression which Irene had made in high places, and seizing with a glance all the advantages which she might gain for him, the count, like a wise and energetic man, prepared for the attack at once. Like Napoleon, he always acted promptly. “I will take this strange young girl home with me,” thought he; “she shall become, when the devil wills it, heiress to part of my fortune, at least. I have no children; she is my niece, and my wife is tired of living alone. . . . Besides it is always pleasant to have a pretty face in the room. . . . Yes, yes, *es ist eine Idee, es ist eine Idee!*” But something would be required to persuade and dazzle her family. “They have scarcely enough to eat,” continued the count, already in

his carriage, driving toward their house, "there is no danger that they will oppose me. They do not care for her enough for that. Besides if it prove necessary, I can buy them off. But will she consent? I think she will. The honey she tasted of last night was sweet. Suppose this a whim of mine; they have only to profit by it. . . . the idiots. I will say to them: You must decide at once, or I will adopt, instead, a young orphan girl who pleases me quite as well. Yes or no, I must have an answer within twenty-four hours, *und damit punktum.*"

It was with these arguments the count presented himself before the prince, who had been notified the day before of his intended visit. It is useless to dwell upon the conversation, or its result. The count was not mistaken in his calculations; the prince and princess were easily persuaded, and received a present from him. Irene, too, gave her consent before the twenty-four hours had passed away. It was not easy for her to give up Litvinof, for she really loved him; she kept her bed for some time after her note was sent to him, and shed many tears. Nevertheless, a month later, the princess took her to St. Petersburg, to the count's home, and left her with the countess, a good woman in her way, but having no more force of character than a hen.

• Litvinof soon afterward left the University to return to

his father's country home. Little by little his wound healed. At first he heard nothing of Irene; he always avoided speaking of St. Petersburg, or its society. In course of time, however, rumors reached him; rumors less disagreeable than strange. Irene had acquired renown; surrounded with splendor, and having a peculiar power of her own, her name had spread further and further, even to the country towns. It was spoken with curiosity, with envy, even with respect, as the name of Countess Vorotinski used to be. At last came the news of her marriage; but Litvinof scarcely gave it a thought; he was already betrothed to Tatiana. The reader can now understand what memories flashed through Litvinof's mind, when he so suddenly cried out: "Can *she* have left it!" We will now return to Baden, and again take up the broken thread of our story.

## CHAPTER IX.

The night was far spent when Litvinof at last fell into a heavy slumber. He did not sleep long, however, but rose with the sun. From his windows he could see the dark outline of the mountains clearly drawn against the bright blue of the summer sky. "How cool and pleasant it seems out under the trees," he thought. He dressed quickly, and casting a dreamy glance at the bouquet, which had budded out more fully during the night, took his cane and started for the Old Castle. Drinking in the strong and bracing morning air, and calmed by its soothing influence, he walked on briskly, his young blood dancing in his veins, and the ground itself seeming to spring beneath his feet. With each step he grew more happy and light-hearted. He walked through a narrow gravel path, in the shade of the dark pines which bordered it. "This is delightful," he now and then exclaimed. Suddenly he heard voices that seemed familiar

to him, and, looking round, saw Vorochilof and Bambae<sup>f</sup> approaching. They had not seen him, and like a truant schoolboy, he sprang from the path, and hid himself behind a bush. He devoutly prayed to be delivered from his countrymen. He would have given almost any sum in order to escape them. His prayer was granted ; his countrymen did not see him. Vorochilof was explaining to Bambae<sup>f</sup> in his self-satisfied tone, the different “phases” of Gothic architecture ; the latter was simply grunting his approbation. It was very clear that Vorochilof was wearying him with his phases, and that the brave enthusiast had had about enough of them. For a long time Litvinof watched them, bending anxiously forward and biting his lips ; for a long time he heard the sharp, nasal sound of the archæological discourse, but, at last, all was still. Litvinof breathed more freely, left his hiding place and continued his walk.

He wandered about for three hours among the mountains. Sometimes he left the path, and sprang from rock to rock, often slipping on the moss which covered them ; sometimes he sat down on a shelf of stone in the shade of an oak or beech tree, and let his thoughts wander to the ceaseless murmur of the brook hidden beneath the ferns, the rustling of the leaves, or the cheery song of the blackbird. A pleasant drowsiness soon took possession

of him, soft arms seemed lulling him to slumber, his eyes closed. With a start he opened them again, but as nothing could be seen except the golden rays of sunshine glimmering through the leaves, he smiled, and this time soundly slept. When he awoke, feeling hungry, he climbed to the Old Castle, where for a few kreutzers, a glass of excellent milk with coffee can be obtained. Scarcely had he taken a seat at one of the little white tables, which are on the terrace near the Castle, when he heard the panting of tired horses, and three carriages appeared, from which a party of ladies and gentlemen descended. Litvinof immediately recognized them as Russians, although they all spoke French, or rather *because* they spoke French. The ladies were dressed with the greatest elegance; the gentlemen wore black coats, newly made and fitting closely to the form, different from the ordinary fashion, gray pantaloons, black cravats, and very glossy silk hats. These gentlemen all had a decidedly military air; in fact they belonged to the army. Litvinof saw before him a pic-nic of young officers, persons of high rank and great weight in society. Their importance was revealed at once by their supercilious manner, their patronizing smiles and their careless yet affected glances. It could be noticed also, in the shrug of their shoulders, the graceful bow, and the slight bending of the knee;

even in the sound of their voices, which always seemed to address less fortunate creatures, in tones of mingled condescension and disgust. All these warriors seemed fresh from the barber's care, and were scented with a strange odor of the barracks and the boudoir, a mixture of the smoke of good cigars and the perfume of genuine patchouli. They all had long, white, aristocratic hands, with finger-nails as smooth and polished as ivory; their mustaches were well waxed, their teeth white and regular, their complexions clear, their cheeks rosy, and their chins smoothly shaven. Some were frivolous, others thoughtful, but all bore the same brand of the most exquisite gentility. Each one seemed thoroughly convinced of his own worth, and the importance of his future position in the State, but for the time being a light shade of that indifference and petulance which appears so natural in a foreign country, agreeably modified this perhaps too marked expression.

After taking their seats in a noisy manner, the party called upon the waiters, who appeared much confused by the numerous orders given them. Litvinof hurriedly finished his glass of milk, paid for it, and, taking up his cane, had nearly passed the last of the pic-nic party, when he was stopped by the sound of a woman's voice.

“Gregory Mikhailovitch, do you not know me?”

He stopped at once; his heart had too often beat responsive to that voice for him to disregard it now. He turned about and saw Irene. She was seated by one of the tables, resting her hands on the back of a chair, bending towards him and smiling; she was gazing on him earnestly, almost with delight.

Litvinof recognized her at once, though she had changed greatly since he had last seen her so many years before. The young girl had become a woman. Her form had rounded into perfect symmetry, and the graceful outline of her sloping shoulders, which had seemed so narrow in former days, now called to mind the cloud encircled goddesses which are pictured on the ceilings of old Italian palaces. Her eyes, however, remained the same, and it seemed to Litvinof that they looked upon him as in those happy days in her humble home at Moscow.

“Irene Pavlovna?” he asked, as if in doubt.

“You recognize me? How delightful! How—” She stopped, blushed slightly, and in a more collected manner said in French: “What a pleasant meeting! Allow me to make you acquainted with my husband. Valerien, M. Litvinof, a friend of my childhood; Valerien Vladimir-ovitch Ratmirof, my husband.”

One of the young officers, the most exquisite perhaps of the whole party, rose and bowed to Litvinof in the

most polite manner, while each one of his companions buried himself, so to speak, in his dignity, silently protesting against any communication with such an ordinary mortal. The ladies, meantime, thought it necessary to wink and smile, and even express their great astonishment.

“Have you been long at Baden?” asked General Rat-mirof, evidently at a loss how to greet the friend of his wife’s childhood.

“Not very long,” answered Litvinof.

“Do you intend to remain here long?” continued the obsequious general.

“I have not yet decided.”

“Ah! I am pleased to hear it.”

The general said no more, neither did Litvinof. They both stood, bowing and staring at each other’s eyebrows.

“*Deux gendarmes un beau dimanche,*” sang, out of tune, (up to the present time, I have never had the pleasure of meeting a Russian gentleman who did not sing out of tune)—a short-sighted, sallow-faced officer, whose features wore a constant expression of irritation, as though he could not make up his mind to forgive his own appearance. He was the only one of the party who did not rejoice in a pink and white complexion.

“Why do you not sit down, Gregory Mikhailovitch?” said Irene, at last.

Litvinof accepted the situation, and took a seat.

“I say, Valerien, give me a light,” said another officer, also young but very stout, with motionless, vacant-looking eyes, and thick and silky side-whiskers, which he caressed gently with his white hands. Ratmirof passed him a silver match-box.

“Have you any cigarettes?” lisped one of the ladies.

“Some real papelitos, Countess.”

“*Deux gendarmes un beau dimanche,*” again sang the short-sighted officer.

“You must surely come to see us,” Irene had in the meantime said to Litvinof, “we are stopping at the *hôtel de l’Europe*. I am always at home from four to six. It is so long since we have met.”

Litvinof looked fixedly at Irene, but she did not evade his glance.

“Yes, Irene, it is a long time. Not since we were at Moscow.”

“At Moscow—at Moscow,” she repeated after a pause. “But come, let us talk together of old times,” she continued. “Do you know, Gregory Mikhailovich, you have not changed much?”

“Indeed! but you have greatly changed, Irene Pavlovna.”

“I have grown older.”

“That is not what I mean. . . .”

“Irene!” said a lady whose yellow hair was surmounted by a hat of the same color, and who had just been whispering and laughing with the gentleman at her side, “Irene!”

“I have grown older,” continued Irene, without answering this lady, “but I have not changed. No, I have not changed at all.”

“*Deux gendarmes un beau dimanche,*” again hummed the irritable officer, whose memory could not carry him beyond the first line of his song.

“That was very good, your Excellency,” said the stout officer in a loud voice, alluding probably to some amusing story circulating in the fashionable world; and, with a harsh laugh, he again assumed his vacant stare. All the rest of the company seemed to share his merriment.

“What a sad dog you are, Boris,” said Ratmirof in a low tone. He spoke these words in English, with a perfect accent.

“Irene!” called a third time the lady in the yellow hat. Irene turned quickly toward her.

“Well! what do you want?”

“I will tell you some other time,” replied the lady, accompanying the words with an affected toss of her head. This lady was not at all good looking, but she seemed to think she was.

Irene frowned and shrugged her shoulders impatiently.

“But where is M. Verdier? Why does he not come?” asked another lady in those drawling tones used by the Russians, which are so shocking to French ears.

“Yes, yes, M. Verdier, M. Verdier,” cried a lady just arrived from Armazas.

“Be comforted, ladies,” said Ratmirof, “M. Verdier promised me that he would place himself to-day at your disposal. He! he! he!” The lady began playing with her fan.

One of the waiters brought forward several glasses of beer.

“*Baierisch Bier?*” asked the stout officer, in a guttural voice and affecting astonishment. “*Guten Morgen.*”

“By the way! Does Count Paul still keep his place?” carelessly asked one young officer of another.

“Yes,” was the reply in the same tone; “but conditionally; it is reported that Serge will succeed him.”

“Indeed!” said the first.

“Yes,” murmured the second.

“I cannot understand,” said the singing officer, “why Paul made such explanations. He tortured a merchant and made him disgorge. . . . Well, what of it? He probably had his reasons.”

“He was afraid of the criticisms of the press,” growled some one.

The irritable officer suddenly flared up.

“Oh ! that is the last thing I should care for. The papers ! the critics ! If I had my way, the papers would not be allowed to publish anything but the meat and bread tax, and the advertisements of the merchants.”

“And of the auction sales of the nobles’ lands,” added Ratmirof.

“Yes, perhaps so. . . . . But, what strange conversation, gentlemen, for Baden, at the Old Castle ! ”

“Not at all,” said the lady with the yellow hat. “I adore political questions.”

“The lady is right,” said an officer with a polite manner and delicate features, like a girl’s. “Why should we avoid these questions. . . . even at Baden ? ” While speaking thus, he turned toward Litvinof with a condescending smile. “Never, under any circumstances, ought an honest man to sacrifice his convictions. Is it not so ? ”

“Certainly,” replied the irritable officer, also glancing at Litvinof, with a severe look, as though addressing him an indirect reproof, “but I do not see the necessity. . . . ”

“Indeed,” answered pleasantly the polite young officer. “Our friend, Valerien Vladimirovitch, has alluded to the offering of the nobles’ lands for sale. Is not that a fact ? ”

“But they cannot be sold, no one will buy them,” said the irritable officer.

“That is true. All the more reason for stating the fact, the deplorable fact. We are ruined and humiliated, that is indisputable; but nevertheless we are great land proprietors; we represent a principle. To support this principle is our duty. (Excuse me, madam, I believe you have dropped your handkerchief.) When positive blindness affects even the most elevated minds of the nation, we ought to make known, with deference to others, of course (here the officer stretched forth his hand) we ought to point out with a patriot’s zeal the abyss toward which we are all tending. We ought to cry aloud, respectfully but firmly, ‘Go back, go back.’ This is our duty.”

“But it would be impossible to retrace our steps,” said Ratmirof, with a thoughtful air.

“Not at all, my dear friend. The further back we went the better would it be for us,” answered the polite officer, smiling and looking again at Litvinof, who this time lost his patience.

“Would you then go back to the times of the Bojars?” he asked.

“And why not? I express my opinion freely. I would repeal everything . . . yes, everything that has been done.”

“Even the 19th of February?” \*

\* It was on the 19th of February that the Emperor Alexander II. issued his decree emancipating the serfs.

“Even the 19th of February. . . . so far as possible. A man is a patriot or he is not. And what of liberty? you ask me. Do you believe that liberty is so sweet to the people? Ask them. . . .”

“Try to take it from them,” said Litvinof.

“What is the gentleman’s name?” whispered the officer to Ratmirof.

“Speaking of the papers and the critics,” suddenly interposed the stout officer, who evidently in this company played the part of a spoiled child, “permit me to tell you a wonderful story in which I play a part. I was informed that an editor had published a libel on me. I ordered him brought before me. . . . ‘So you amuse yourself, my friend, by writing libels?’ said I. ‘So you are burning with patriotism?’ ‘I am,’ he replied. ‘And you love money too, do you not?’ ‘I do,’ said he. At this point, gentlemen, I placed the handle of my cane beneath his nose. ‘Do you like that, my dear fellow?’ ‘No,’ said he, ‘I do not.’ ‘Be sure of that, I have a strong arm, you know.’ ‘No, I do not like it, I am sure.’ ‘Very well, my dear fellow, I like it, but not on my back. Do you understand the allegory, my dear friend?’ ‘I do,’ said he. ‘Very well, hereafter try to be more considerate and polite. Now, go! there is a trouble, pray for me night and day.’ And the editor went away.”

The officer began to laugh. All joined in with him except Irene, who did not even smile, but threw a gloomy look upon the speaker.

The polite officer shook Boris by the shoulder.

“ You made that all up, my dear fellow. You can not make me believe that you can frighten **any** one with your cane. You do not even own one. You told that story to make the ladies laugh. But this has nothing to do with our subject. I was just saying that we must retrace our steps. Understand me; I am not opposed to what is called progress, but these universities, seminaries and common-schools, these students and priests’ sons, these plebeians, all this trash, this chaff, these small landowners, worse than the old serfs,” (he said all this in a drawing tone), “ these are what trouble me. These we must put down.” (Here he cast another pleasant look at Litvinof). “ Yes, we must put them down. Do not forget that **we** do not ask for any of these so-called rights. Self-government, for example, do any of us wish it? Do you, ladies, who not only govern yourselves, but also do what you will with us?” A mischievous smile here lighted up his delicate features. “ Dear friends, why should we, like the hare, run into danger while trying to avoid it? The people are satisfied with you. . . . at present; they praise you, and are ready to enter into your views. . . . but they

are not to be trusted. The former system was the best and surest. Do not let the common people reason on these things; confide in the aristocracy, the only true power, and I promise you that all will go well. As for progress, I would not stand in the way of that. Only do not impose lawyers and juries on us, and do not interfere with military discipline; then, if you desire, you may build bridges, wharves and hospitals, and even light the streets with gas."

"They set St. Petersburg on fire, and called that progress," said the irritable officer.

"I see by your speech that you can be very bitter," said the stout officer; "you would make an excellent attorney-general for the Holy Synod; for me, with *Orphée aux Enfers*, progress has spoken its last word."

"You are always saying stupid things," cried the lady from Armazas, in a shrill voice.

"I am never more in earnest, madam, than when I am saying stupid things," answered the officer in an emphatic tone.

"That is one of M. Verdier's speeches," said Irene in a low voice.

"Power and elegance for me, especially power," continued the stout officer. "Or, as we say in Russia: Be polite, but break his jaw."

“Oh! you are a violent fellow,” said the polite officer.  
“Ladies, do not believe him; he would not hurt a fly;  
he is contented with breaking hearts.”

“No, Boris,” began Ratmirof, after exchanging glances with his wife, “joking aside, you are exaggerating. Progress is inseparable from a nation’s life; we must not lose sight of it; it is a problem to be studied.”

“Oh! yes,” said the stout officer, “we all know that you are expecting to enter into politics.”

“Not at all; leave politics out of the question; only let us recognize the truth.”

Boris began to stroke his whiskers and stare again into the air.

“The study of social problems is very important, because in the development of peoples, in the destinies, so to speak, of nations. . . .”

“Valerien,” interrupted Boris, in an expressive tone, “there are ladies present. I would not have believed this of you. Do you think you are in a committee-room?”

“Thank goodness! their mouths are all stopped at last,” said the irritable officer, and he again went at his song, “*Deux gendarmes, un beau dimanche.*”

Ratmirof delicately touched his face with a fine cambric handkerchief, and subsided into silence.

Boris turned toward a lady by his side, and without low-

ering his voice or changing his expression, asked, "when she would crown his flame?" adding that "he was deeply smitten, and suffering all the pangs of unrequited love."

During all this time Litvinof had gradually become more and more uncomfortable. His pride, his honest and manly pride was wounded. What had he, the son of a poor clerk, in common with these military aristocrats from St. Petersburg? He loved what they hated, and hated what they loved; this he understood clearly, and felt strongly. He found their wit flat, their conceit insufferable and their manners overbearing. Even in the smoothness of their words, there was concealed an insulting contempt. Yet though he despised them, he could not entirely repress a feeling of danger while in the presence of these men, these enemies as they seemed. "How foolish I am to remain here," he said to himself; "my company is not desired, and I serve only as a laughing-stock for them."

Even Irene could not longer detain him; as he looked upon her, only painful thoughts came to his mind. He rose, and bowed to the party.

"Are you going so soon?" said Irene. After a moment's thought, however, she did not urge him to remain, but simply made him promise to call upon her soon. General Ratmirof returned his bow with his usual

politeness, shook hands with him and accompanied him to the border of the terrace. Litvinof, however, had scarcely entered the path before him, when he heard shouts of laughter from the party he had left. This merriment was not at his expense, but was caused by the sudden appearance of the so-much-desired M. Verdier, who was mounted on a donkey, and covered with a blue blouse and Swiss hat. Litvinof thought they were laughing at him. His face grew red, and his lips compressed, as though he had swallowed a dose of colocynth.

“What a contemptible set!” he muttered, without reflecting that the few moments he had spent in their society scarcely gave him the right to judge them so severely.

So these were the people among whom Irene’s lot had fallen; among whom she lived and reigned, he thought. It was for them that she had sacrificed her dignity, and trampled under foot the most sacred feelings of her heart. It seemed like retribution, as though she had not deserved a happier fate. How glad he was that Irene had not questioned him regarding his thoughts and feelings. He would have had to explain before those enemies. . . “Never! never!” he exclaimed, as he took a full breath of the fresh mountain air.

He returned to Baden at a rapid pace. He thought of

his betrothed, the good and gentle Tatiana, who now seemed to him still more pure and true and noble. With what pleasure did he recall her features, her words, even her slightest peculiarities ! With what impatience did he await her coming !

The rapid walk soothed his nerves. Arriving at his rooms, he took up a book and sat down to read ; he soon let it fall, however, and gave a loose rein to his thoughts. What had happened to him ? He had simply met Irene. But this meeting seemed so strange, so incomprehensible. Could it be possible ? He had seen and spoken to Irene herself. And why did she not have that hateful air, which characterized all the others ? Why did she seem scarcely able to endure her situation ? She was in their camp, but she was not an enemy. And why did she meet him so kindly, and why urge him to call upon her ?

Litvinof broke suddenly from this train of thought, and raising his head, with rapture cried : “ Oh ! Tatiana, thou art my good, my guardian angel ! It is thee only that I love, and will love forever ! I will not see Irene again. May God bless her, and may she be happy with her officers ! ” So saying, he took up his book again.

## CHAPTER X.

Litvinof took up his book, but found it impossible to read. He went out, walked about a little, listened to the music, looked at the players in the gambling hall, and finally went back to his room, trying again to read without better success than before. The time seemed to pass very slowly. At last Pichtchalkin, the worthy justice of the peace, came in, and passed three long hours with him. He talked incessantly, putting questions to himself, and arguing upon them, touching upon now the most elevated, now the most ordinary subjects, and finally so wearied Litvinof that he was on the point of shrieking with despair. For creating a cold and dreary gloom without escape or remedy, Pichtchalkin had not his equal, even among the profound philosophers who possess this faculty in the highest degree. The very appearance of his bald and shiny head, his small eyes and wofully regular nose, unconsciously gave one the blues, while his slow and monotonous baritone voice seemed made expressly to enunciate in grave and measured tones such sentences as the following: Two and two

make four, not three or five ; water is a liquid ; benevolence is praiseworthy ; credit is as indispensable to the state as to the individual, in financial operations. Notwithstanding, he was one of the best of men ; such is the fate of Russia, the best of her subjects are uncomfortable associates. At last Pichtchalkin left him, but was succeeded by Bindasof, who boldly asked for a hundred florins, which Litvinof lent him, though not liking Bindasof at all, and very certain that the money, which he really needed himself, would never return to him. Why then did he lend it ? the reader asks. Perhaps he can find the answer in his own experience. How many times has he done very much the same thing ? Bindasof did not take the trouble to thank Litvinof, but ordered a large glass of Affenthaler (a native red wine) and went out, without wiping his lips, making a great clatter with his heavy boots. How angry with himself Litvinof felt, as he saw the thick red neck of the insolent fellow disappearing through the door !

In the evening, he received a letter from Tatiana, who wrote that, on account of the illness of her aunt, she would not be able to go to Baden for five or six days at least. This letter caused him great disappointment and added still further to his gloom. He went to bed early, in a very bad humor. The next morning his

room was filled by his countrymen ; Bambaef, Vorochilof, Pichtchalkin, two officers and two students from Heidelberg, all called at the same early hour, and did not take their departure till near dinner time, though they had nothing in particular to say, and evidently were not greatly entertained. They did not seem to know what to do with themselves. They began by speaking of Goubaref, who had returned to Heidelberg, where they thought they must go to join him ; then they talked philosophy, touched on the Polish question, and told various scandalous stories of the roulette table and its frequenters. The conversation finally turned to the subject of men noted for their strength, size and gluttony. Some very old and stale stories were told. The best of them were of the deacon who made a bet that he could swallow thirty-three herrings ; and of the soldier who broke a cowhide over his brow. Pichtchalkin, with a yawn, said that he had himself known a peasant in Ukraine, who weighed on the day that he died more than six hundred pounds ; also a farmer who breakfasted on three eggs and a sturgeon. Bambaef was enthusiastic as usual, and stated that he himself was equal to the task of eating an entire sheep if he had good sauces with it ; and Vorochilof told such a preposterous story that they were all struck dumb, and finally stole

away one by one, rolling up their eyes in blank astonishment. Left alone, Litvinof endeavored to find some occupation for the evening, but his thoughts were so confused that he gave up the attempt in despair. As he was preparing for a late breakfast, the next morning, he heard a knock at his door. Good heavens ! Here are some of my friends of yesterday returned, he thought; and with great reluctance answered, "*Herein !*" The door softly opened and Potoughine appeared. Litvinof was delighted and surprised.

"How kind in you !" he said, grasping his unexpected visitor by the hand. "I would certainly have gone after you, if you had told me where you lived. Sit down; let me take your hat ; sit down !"

Potoughine made no response to this friendly salutation, but remained standing in the middle of the room, smiling and shaking his head. Litvinof's cordial greeting evidently touched him, but there was to be also seen upon his face a somewhat embarrassed expression.

"Pardon me," he stammered. "I am very glad . . . . but this time I have simply brought a message to you."

"Do you mean to say, ' said Litvinof reproachfully, "that you would not have come of your own accord ?"

"Oh ! no, but . . . . perhaps I should not have troub

led you to-day, if I had not been requested to call. As I said, I have a message for you."

" May I ask from whom ?"

" From a lady whom you know, Irene Pavlovna Ratmirof. You promised her, some time ago, that you would call upon her, and you have not done so yet."

Litvinof looked at Potoughine with surprise.

" You are acquainted with Madame Ratmirof ?"

" I am."

" Are you well acquainted with her ?"

" I am a good friend of hers."

Litvinof was silent for a moment.

" Permit me to ask you," he continued, " if you know why Irene Pavlovna wishes to see me ?"

Potoughine walked toward the window.

" I partly know. So far as I can judge, she is very glad to have met you again, and wishes to renew her former relations with you."

" Her former relations," repeated Litvinof. " Excuse me, if I ask another question. Do you know what those relations were ?"

" I really do not ; but I presume," added Potoughine, turning suddenly toward Litvinof with a kind expression, " I presume that they were very pleasant ; for Irene

Pavlovna praised you highly, and made me promise to bring you to her. You will go?"

"When?"

"Now . . . . at once."

Litvinof's arms fell at his side.

"Irene Pavlovna supposes," continued Potoughine, "that the . . . what shall I say? . . . that the company in which you saw her the other day may not have been very congenial to you; but she wished me to say to you that the devil is not so black as he is painted."

"Hum! . . . the comparison is a very good one as respects that company."

"Yes . . . in a general way."

"Hum! . . . what is your opinion of the devil, Sozonthe Ivanovitch?"

"I believe, Gregory Mikhailovitch, that he is not always what he is painted."

"Is he better?"

"Better or worse, it is difficult to tell, but he is not what he is said to be. Well! are we going?"

"Sit down and rest a little first. I must confess that it seems somewhat strange . . . ."

"May I ask what seems strange?"

"How you became the friend of Irene Pavlovna."

Potoughine modestly replied,

“With my face, and my position in the world, it must seem strange ; but you know Shakespeare says, ‘There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.’ Let us employ a metaphor. Here is a tree ; there is not a breath of wind, it is impossible for the leaf on the lower branch to touch the one on the branch above it. But the storm comes, the branches are thrown together, and the two leaves now can touch each other.”

“Then there have been storms ?”

“You may well believe it ! Can we live without them ? But enough of philosophy ; it is time to go.”

Litvinof still hesitated.

“Heavens !” cried Potoughine with a comical glance, “what is the matter with the young men of to-day ? A charming woman wishes to see them, even sends messengers to them, and they stop to consider ! It is a shame, sir, a shame. Here is your hat, and *vor-wärts !* as our friends the impetuous Germans say.”

Litvinof still hesitated for a moment, but finally took his hat, and went with Potoughine.

## CHAPTER XI.

They directed their steps toward one of the finest hotels of Baden, and asked for Madame Ratmirof. The porter first took their names, and then answered that *die Frau Fürstin ist zu Hause*. He showed them the way up-stairs, knocked at the door, and announced their names. *Die Frau Fürstin* received them at once ; she was alone, her husband having gone to Carlsruhe to meet a Russian gentleman of great influence, who was passing through that city.

Irene was seated by a little table, embroidering on canvas, when Potoughine and Litvinof entered the room. She hurriedly laid her work away, pushed the little table to one side, and rose to meet them. A glow of satisfaction spread over her handsome face. She was dressed in a morning wrapper of thin material, which did not entirely conceal the graceful outline of her arms and shoulders ; her hair was loosely and carelessly arranged. She cast a rapid glance on Potoughine, murmured, “Thank you !” and holding out her hand to Litvinof, began pleasantly to chide him for having so long neglected an old friend.

Litvinof attempted to excuse himself, but she interrupted him at once, and taking his hat, made him sit down. Potoughine also took a chair, but soon left under the plea of urgent business, promising to call again later in the day. Irene gave him another quick look and nodded her head in a friendly way, but did not try to detain him. As soon as the door had closed upon him, she quickly turned toward Litvinof.

“Gregory Mikhailovitch,” she said in Russian, in her soft and silvery tones, “at last we are alone. I can now say to you that it gives me great joy to meet you, because I now have the opportunity” (while saying this, she looked straight into his eyes) “of asking your pardon.”

Litvinof trembled in spite of himself. He had not expected so sudden an attack; he was not prepared to hear her speak so boldly of the past.

“Why . . . . my pardon for what?” he stammered. Irene blushed.

“Why? You know very well,” she replied, turning her glance away. “I have been unjust toward you, Gregory Mikhailovitch, although, without doubt, . . . . it was my fate,“(Litvinof remembered her letter.)” I would not undo what I have done; . . . . in fact, that would be impossible; but having met you so unexpect-

edly, it seemed to me that we ought to again be friends; . . . . it will pain me very much if we do not become so. . . . This is why I think that we should have a thorough explanation, so that hereafter there may not be between us any further . . . . misunderstanding. You must tell me that you pardon me; otherwise I can not help feeling that you still harbor some ill-will. *That is all!* It probably is foolish for me to so insist on this, for you have doubtless long since forgotten all about it; nevertheless, I shall be glad to hear you say that you have pardoned me."

Irene said this without stopping to take breath, and Litvinof noticed that tears were sparkling in her eyes.

"Why excuse yourself, why ask for pardon, Irene Pavlovna?" he hurriedly replied. "Let the past go! I have no feeling now, except surprise that in the midst of the splendor which surrounds you, you should think at all of the humble companion of your early youth."

"Does it surprise you?" said Irene in a low voice.

"It does," replied Litvinof; "I can not imagine . . . ."

"You have not told me that you pardon me," said Irene, interrupting him.

"I sincerely rejoice in your good fortune, Irene Pavlovna, and wish you all possible happiness."

"And you will think ill of me no more?"

“I will remember only the happy moments, which I once passed in your society.”

Irene held out both her hands. Litvinof seized them and did not let them fall at once. That single touch filled his heart with feelings he had long forgotten. Irene again looked in his face, but this time she was smiling. Now, for the first time, he gathered up sufficient courage to observe her carefully. He saw again those features which had once been so dear to him, those eyes so fathomless, beneath their long and drooping lashes, that wavy fall of the hair upon the forehead, even that slight curl of the lips and sly arching of the brows, which accompanied her fascinating and well-remembered smile. But how beautiful she had grown! How exquisitely graceful was her form! There was no artificial bloom on that fresh and youthful face. . . . She was indeed very, very beautiful! Litvinof began to dream. He was still gazing on her, but his thoughts were far away.

Irene noticed his abstraction.

“Good! now this is settled,” she continued in a louder tone, “my conscience is at rest, and I can satisfy my curiosity.”

“Your curiosity?” repeated Litvinof, who did not catch her meaning.

“Yes. I want to know what you have been doing, and what your plans are for the future ; I want to know all. And you must tell me the truth, for I forewarn you, that I have not lost sight of you . . . . any more than could be helped.”

“You have not lost sight of me, . . . . you, at St. Petersburg ?”

“In the midst of the splendor which surrounded me, as you have just remarked. Precisely so. We will refer again to this splendor ; but now tell me your story. We have plenty of time before us ; no one will disturb our interview. It will be delightful,” she continued, gayly throwing herself back in an arm-chair.

“Now, go on.”

“Before commencing, I must thank you,” said Litvinof.

“What for ?”

“For the bouquet which I found in my room.”

“What bouquet ? I know nothing of it.”

“What ?”

“I tell you, I know nothing of it. Go on with your story. Oh ! how kind in Potoughine to have brought you here.”

Litvinof was all attention.

"Have you known this M. Potoughine a long time ? he asked.

"Yes, a long time ; . . . but go on."

"Do you know him well ?"

"Oh ! yes," (Irene sighed.) "I became acquainted with him under peculiar circumstances. Of course you have heard of Eliza Belsky, who met with so sad a death two years ago . . . . But I forget, you are not acquainted with our affairs. How strange ! here is a man who knows nothing of what is passing among us ! And I can talk with him in Russian, incorrect, it is true, but still preferable to that everlasting, insipid, and insufferable French jargon of St. Petersburg."

"Potoughine, you were saying, knew this . . . ?"

"It is a painful subject for me to talk upon," Irene answered, interrupting him. "Eliza was my dearest friend at school, and afterward, at St. Petersburg, we were inseparable. She trusted me with all her secrets ; she was very unhappy and suffered much. Potoughine behaved admirably, helping her in her trouble like a true gentleman. He sacrificed himself for her. It was then that I first appreciated his worth. But we are getting away from our subject ; I am waiting to hear your story, Gregory Mikhailovitch."

"But my story can not interest you, Irene Pavlovna."

"That is my affair."

"Do you remember, Irene Pavlovna, that we have not seen each other for ten years or more? How many things have happened in all that time!"

"That is why I wish to hear them from you."

"I do not know where to commence."

"At the beginning. The day when you . . . rather when I went to St. Petersburg. You then left Moscow. Do you know that I have never visited Moscow since that time?"

"Indeed!"

"It was impossible at first; then, after I was married . . ."

"Have you been married long?"

"About four years."

"Have you any children?"

"No," was her short reply.

Litvinof was silent for a moment.

"And up to the time of your marriage, did you live with that . . . what is his name . . . that Count Reuzenbach?"

Irene looked at him attentively. She wished to dis-

cover the purpose of this question. Was he so ignorant as he appeared to be?

“No,” at last she answered.

“Then your parents . . . I have not spoken of them before. They are . . . ?”

“They are quite well.”

“They live at Moscow still?”

“They do.”

“And your brothers? your sisters?”

“Are all well. I have obtained positions for them all.”

“Indeed!” Litvinof cast a side glance at Irene. “Really, Irene Pavlovna, you are the one to tell the story, if only . . .”

He did not know how to finish his remark. Irene held her hands before her face, and nervously twisted her wedding-ring.

“I will tell you some time,” she finally said. “But it is your turn first; because, you see, although I have kept track of you, I do not know much of your adventures, while you have certainly heard of the principal events in which I have taken part. Is not this so? Do not deceive me.”

“You have occupied too high a position in the world, Irene Pavlovna, not to have been talked about

. . . especially in the country, where every rumor is believed."

"But you have not believed them? What rumors have you heard?"

"I very seldom heard any. I lived a very retired life."

"You were a volunteer in the Crimea, though?"

"Did you know that?"

"You see I did. I told you that I kept a watch upon you."

Litvinof became confused again.

"Why, then," he said in a low tone, "should I try to tell you what you already know?"

"To please me, Gregory Mikhailovitch."

Litvinof cast down his eyes and began, in a hasty and disconnected manner, to give the so much desired story. Often he paused, addressing Irene with an appealing glance in the hope that she would bid him stop; but all in vain. Irene sat quietly, leaning on the arm of her chair, her hair thrown carelessly back, and her attention apparently fixed upon him. By studying her features, however, a careful observer would have discovered that she was not listening to Litvinof at all, but was buried in deep thought. The object of this reverie was not Litvinof, however, though he blushed and

trembled beneath her burning glance ; an entire life was unrolling itself before her, and that life was not Litvinof's, but her own.

Before ending his story, Litvinof stopped with a painful feeling which had gradually become more and more intense. This time Irene was silent, not even asking him to finish his account.

Placing her hands before her eyes, she sank back in her chair and remained motionless. Litvinof waited a few moments ; then remembering that he had been there two hours and more, he rose and took up his hat. At this moment the noise of footsteps was heard in the adjoining room, and Valerien Vladimirovitch Ratmirof appeared, exhaling that aristocratic perfume which never deserted him.

Litvinof bowed to the amiable general ; Irene leisurely removed her hand from before her face, and looking at her husband, said in French,

“ Ah ! you have come back so soon ! What time is it ? ”

“ Nearly four o'clock, my dear, and you are not yet dressed ; the princess will be waiting for us.” Then turning toward Litvinof, he added in his usual courteous tone, “ Your entertaining guest has made you forget the hour.”

We must here ask the reader's patience, while we give a few details respecting General Ratmirof. His father was the illegitimate descendant of a nobleman of the time of Alexander I., and a French actress. This nobleman had pushed his son forward in the world, but had not left him any fortune. The son, father of Valerien, had not had time to become rich himself; he had risen to the rank of colonel and chief of police, when death suddenly overtook him. A year before he died, he had married a wealthy young widow, who had placed herself under his protection. The offspring of this marriage, Valerien Ratmirof, had been admitted, by special order, to the military school, and soon attracted the notice of his superiors, less by his success in study, than by his military bearing and perfect obedience to orders. He entered the army, and had a brilliant career, thanks to his modest bearing, his address in the ball-room, and the graceful and spirited manner in which, at parade, he rode the horses which his comrades lent him; thanks, finally, to his familiar but respectful manner toward his superiors, and his kind and flattering interest in others, to all of which he added a small grain of liberalism. This liberalism, however, did not deter him from having five peasants beaten to death in a small town of White Russia which he had been ordered

ed to bring to terms. His appearance was singularly youthful and attractive. Having a fair complexion and rosy cheeks, being graceful and obliging in his manner, he met with great success in the world of fashion ; the dowagers especially doted on him. Habitually prudent and always keeping his own counsel, General Ratmirof, like the busy bee, which gathers precious sweets from the plainest flowers, moved constantly in the best society, and, without instruction or advice, but with certain natural gifts, and an unalterable determination to push ahead as far as possible, at length found that there were no longer any obstacles before him.

There was a constrained smile on Litvinof's face while the general was speaking ; Irene simply shrugged her shoulders.

"Well," she said in a serious tone, "have you seen the count?"

"Of course I have. He desired me to give you his regards."

"Indeed! And is your dear patron as stupid as ever?"

General Ratmirof did not answer her ; her petulance provoked only a slight smile, such as is sometimes accorded to the saucy speeches of a child.

"Yes," added Irene, "your dear count is very, very stupid."

"It was you, yourself, that sent me to him," muttered the general. Then turning toward Litvinof, he inquired in Russian if he was taking the waters at Baden.

"I am in good health, and do not need them," answered Litvinof.

"I am glad to hear it," said the general, with a gracious smile. "People do not usually visit Bader for their health. The waters, however, are very beneficial to any one suffering, as I do, from a spasmodic cough."

Irene rose suddenly.

"We shall meet again soon, I hope, Gregory Mikhailovitch," said she in French, interrupting her husband with a contemptuous glance. "I must now prepare to call on this old princess whose tiresome parties I detest."

"You are not very complimentary to any one to-day," muttered her husband, as he went into his room.

Litvinof was walking toward the door, when Irene stopped him.

"You have not told me all," said she; "you have concealed the most important fact."

“What do you mean?”

“I am told that you are about to marry.”

Litvinof blushed to his very temples. He had purposely not spoken of Tatiana. It was very unpleasant for him to find that Irene had not only discovered his secret, but also his attempt to conceal it from her. Irene’s eyes were fixed upon his face. In his confusion he stammered.

“Yes, I intend to marry,” and quickly left the room.

Ratmirof soon returned.

“Why are you not dressing?” he asked.

“You must go alone; I have a headache.”

“But the princess . . .”

Irene cast one scornful glance upon her husband, turned quickly on her heel and left the room.

## CHAPTER XII.

Litvinof was as much dissatisfied with himself, as though he had lost at roulette or had failed to keep his word. His conscience told him that it was not right for a man who was engaged, a man of his age especially, to allow himself to be so influenced by tender memories of his former passion. "Why did I call upon her?" he asked himself. "On her part there is only coquetry, whim, caprice. Her life has become monotonous in its grandeur, and she has taken a fancy to me, as an epicure will sometimes capriciously prefer to eat black bread. Why did I call upon her? Do I really despise her?" He was much troubled by this last thought. "Surely," he continued, "there is and can be no harm in this; I know what I am doing. Still it is dangerous to play with fire, and I will try to avoid it altogether." Litvinof dared not yet fully admit to himself how beautiful Irene now seemed to him, nor how powerfully she exerted her former influence upon him.

The day seemed very long and dreary. At dinner he

sat beside a fine-looking gentleman with a heavy mustache, who did not speak a word, and gave no sign of breathing except by the rolling of his eyes. A hic-cough, however, betrayed to Litvinof his nationality, for he immediately cried out in Russian, with a severe expression, "I knew I ought not to eat that melon!" The evening brought no consolation with it. Under the very eyes of Litvinof, Bindasof won at play four times as much as he had borrowed of him, and not only did not offer to repay him, but even gave him a threatening look as though he resented his being a witness of his gain. The next morning, a troop of his countrymen again took possession of his room. As soon as he could, he got rid of them, and then walked to the mountains, where first he met Irene, whom he pretended not to see; then Potoughine, with whom he would have been glad to talk, but his remarks elicited no reply. Potoughine was leading by the hand a little girl elegantly dressed. Her hair was very light, her eyes large and dull, her face pale and sickly, but marked with that impatient and imperious expression which spoiled children often have. Litvinof passed two hours among the mountains and then returned by the *Allée Lichtenthal*. A lady whose face was covered by a blue veil was seated on

a bench beside the path. She rose and moved toward him, as he approached ; he recognized Irene.

“ Why do you avoid me, Gregory Mikhailovitch ? ” she said, in a trembling voice which betrayed deep feeling.

Litvinof was confused.

“ Avoid you, Irene Pavlovna ? ”

“ Yes, you . . . . ”

Irene appeared greatly agitated and also somewhat angry.

“ You are mistaken, I assure you.”

“ No, I am not mistaken. This morning when we met, I saw that you recognized me. You can not say that you did not.”

“ Truly, Irene Pavlovna. . . . ”

“ Gregory Mikhailovitch, you are an honest man, and have always told the truth. Now answer me ! Did you not recognize me ? Did you not intentionally turn away ? ”

Litvinof looked at Irene. Her eyes shone with strange brilliancy, her lips and cheeks betrayed their paleness even beneath her veil. There was something irresistibly sad and supplicating in the expression of her face and the trembling of her voice. . . . Litvinof could dissemble no longer.

“Yes . . . . I recognized you,” he answered, after a moment’s pause.

Irene shuddered and let her arms fall heavily by her side.

“Why did you not speak to me?” she murmured.

“Why . . . . why . . . .” Litvinof had left the walk, Irene silently following him. “Why?” he repeated, while his face grew flushed and his form trembled with anger. “You . . . . you ask me this, after what has happened in the past between us? Not lately, it is true, but before . . . . at Moscow.”

“But we decided; you promised me . . . .” said Irene.

“I promised nothing!” answered he. “Excuse my hasty words, but you demand the truth; judge then for yourself. Must I not attribute your . . . . I know not what to call it . . . . your pertinacity, to a caprice which I confess I can not understand, to a desire on your part to regain your former influence over me? Our paths are now very far apart! I have forgotten the past and become as another man; you are married and happy, or at least, you seem to be; you enjoy an enviable position in the world. Why then should there be this renewed intimacy? We can not understand each other now; there can be no sympathy

between us either as regards the future or the past . . . . above all, as regards the past."

Litvinof spoke these words rapidly with an averted face. Irene did not stir, except that, from time to time, she half way held out her hands toward him. She seemed begging him to stop, to listen to her, and as she heard his closing sentence, she fiercely bit her lip as though wounded to the quick.

"Gregory Mikhailovitch," she answered in a calmer tone, as she walked still further from the path where a few persons were passing, Litvinof this time following her. "Gregory Mikhailovitch, believe me! If I imagined that I still retained a shadow of influence over you, I would be the first to oppose our meeting. If I have not done so, if I have endeavored, notwithstanding . . . . my past errors, to renew my acquaintance with you, it is because . . . . because . . . ."

"Because," repeated Litvinof somewhat harshly.

"Because," replied Irene, with sudden energy, "I could not help it; because I was suffocating in that society, in that *enviable* position of which you speak; because meeting a man in the midst of all these puppets—you had a sample of them, the other day, at the Old Castle—he appeared to my thirsty soul like a spring in a desert. For this, you call me capricious.

you suspect and even repel me, your only reason for so doing, being that I once sinned against you, . . . . still more against myself."

"You made your own free choice, Irene Pavlovna," replied Litvinof fiercely, with his face still turned away.

"It was my own . . . . I do not complain, I have no right to complain," hastily answered Irene, whose agitation seemed relieved by the very severity of Litvinof. "I know that you accuse me justly, and do not attempt to excuse myself. I only wish to make you understand my feelings, to show you that I am not governed by caprice. Play the coquette with you! That is impossible! When I saw you, all that was good in me, all the happy and innocent feelings of my youth were reawakened. I lived again in that happy time, when I had not yet made my choice, that happy time before these last ten years. . . ."

"Excuse me, Irene Pavlovna, but if I am not mistaken, the bright and joyous period of your life dates from the time of our separation."

Irene touched her handkerchief to her lips.

"You speak cruel words, Gregory Mikhailovitch, but I can not be angry with you. Oh! no, these years have not been pleasant ones; it was not for my own

good that I left Moscow. I have not known a single happy moment since that time, though you may have heard a different story. If I were happy could I talk with you as I did just now? I tell you, you do not know what these men are. They have no mind, no feeling; only cunning and address; music, poetry and the fine arts are all unknown to them. You may say that I used to care little enough for such things, but I never was as ignorant and indifferent as they. It is not a woman of the fashionable world that stands before you—a single glance will tell you that, if you will look upon me—but a poor creature, a true subject for compassion. Do not wonder at my words . . . . my pride is gone. I hold out my hand to you as a beggar. . . . I ask for alms," she added with an impulse both sudden and irresistible; "I ask for alms, and you . . . .!"

Her voice failed her. Litvinof turned his head and looked upon her; she was panting, her lips were trembling. He felt his heart beat quickly, and his anger gently melt away.

"You say," continued Irene, "that our paths in life are wide apart; I know that you are about to marry one whom you love, and that you have your life-work laid out before you; but we have not become such strangers to each other, Gregory Mikhailovitch, that we

can not understand each other. Do you think that I have wholly lost my senses, that I am buried in this mire in the midst of which I live? Do not think so, I beg of you. Let my wearied spirit rest a little, even though I have to ask it in the name of those bygone days, which you will not forget. Let me gain some good from our meeting; I do not ask much, only a little sympathy, only that you will not drive me off, but let me rest a little while. . . ."

Irene ceased; her voice was choked with tears. She sighed and held out her hand. Litvinof took it slowly and pressed it lightly.

"Let us be friends," murmured Irene.

"Friends," repeated Litvinof in a sad tone.

"Yes, friends; and if that be asking too much, let us at least be on good terms with each other, as though nothing had ever happened. . . ."

"As though nothing had ever happened," repeated Litvinof. "You just said, Irene Pavlovna, that I will not forget those bygone days . . . what if I can not forget them?"

A rapid smile flitted over Irene's face, but it was immediately followed by an abstracted, almost terrified expression.

"Do as I do, Gregory Mikhailovitch; remember only

what was good in them; now give me your promise . . . . your sacred promise. . . .”

“To do what?”

“Not to avoid me . . . . not to wound me without cause. . . . Do you promise?”

“Yes.”

“And you will drive away all evil thoughts of me?”

“Yes . . . . but I must say that I can not understand you.”

“It is not necessary that you should . . . . besides, if you are patient, you will understand me. Do you promise?”

“I have already done so.”

“Thank you! I have always believed you. Now listen to me. I expect you to call on me to-day and to-morrow; I will surely be at home. I must leave you now; the duchess is walking in the path; she has seen me and I must speak to her. Farewell! Give me your hand; quick! quick! farewell!”

With a sudden pressure of the hand, Irene left him and went toward a lady of uncertain age, who was walking with a measured and majestic tread over the graveled path; she was followed by two maids of honor and a footman in showy livery.

“Ah! good-day, dear madam,” said the duchess, as Irene respectfully drew near. “How do you do to-day. Come and walk with me a little while.”

“Your highness is too kind,” answered Irene in an insinuating tone.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Litvinof waited till the duchess and her party were out of sight, and then walked out upon the path. He could not understand his feelings ; he was ashamed and frightened, but at the same time his vanity was flattered. Irene's explanation had taken him unawares ; her hurried and burning words had fallen on him like a storm. "What strange beings are these women of the world," he thought ; "how inconsistent they are, how they are spoiled by the circle in which they live, the emptiness of which they themselves appreciate !" The fact was, he repeated these commonplaces, in order to drive away more troublesome thoughts. He felt that if he should give himself up to serious reflection, he would probably convict himself of wrong. He therefore walked slowly to and fro, trying to fix his attention on the things about him. Suddenly he found himself near a bench, saw a man's legs in front of him, and raised his head. The legs belonged to a gentleman reading a paper, and this gentleman was Potoughine. Litvinof uttered a slight

exclamation of surprise ; Potoughine laid his paper on his knees, and gave him a sober look ; Litvinof returned a still more serious glance.

“ May I sit down by you ?” he said at last.

“ Certainly ; it will give me great pleasure. Only I warn you that you may become disgusted talking with me. I feel very misanthropical this morning ; every thing appears in its darkest colors to me.”

“ That does not trouble me, Sozonthe Ivanovitch,” answered Litvinof as he sat down on the bench ; “ in fact, it exactly suits my present state of mind. But what has put you out of humor ?”

“ Nothing that I ought to care for,” said Potoughine. “ I should rather be pleased, for I was just reading in the paper of a project for judiciary reform in Russia, and I perceive, with sincere satisfaction, that we are at last showing some good sense ; that we are not again attempting, under the plea of being independent, patriotic, or original, to make a little addition of our own invention, to what is purely and plainly the logic of Europe. Instead of this, we are now freely borrowing, without amendment, all that is good from other countries. We made enough mistakes of this kind at the time of emancipation. Look at the communal government which was then established ; rectify that now if

you can ! No, I ought not to be in a bad humor on this account. To my misfortune, however, I have just met a *rough diamond*, and have been talking with him. These rough diamonds, these boasters always give me a fit of blues."

"Whom do you mean ?" asked Litvinof.

"Why, you know, that stout gentleman that we see about, who thinks himself a musical genius. 'Doubtless,' he says, 'I am not very well informed, for I have not studied ; but I have in me far more melody and originality than Meyerbeer.' In the first place, I wanted to ask him why he had not studied. In the second place, leaving Meyerbeer out of the question, there is twenty times as much originality in the player on the German flute, who modestly fills his place in the German orchestra, as in all your rough diamonds put together. The difference is this, that the flute-player keeps his ideas to himself and does not importune the country of Mozart and of Haydn to listen to them ; while our boaster, as soon as he has composed the smallest waltz or ballad, with his hands in his vest-pockets and a disdainful smile upon his lips, declares himself a genius. It is the same in painting and in every thing. O these rough diamonds ! I have had enough of them. Would it not be better to have done

with all this boasting, with all such falsehoods as these : 'No one ever dies of hunger in Russia. Nowhere can you travel so swiftly. There are enough of us to bury our enemies beneath our hats.' I hear everywhere of the richness of the Russian nature, of our superior instinct, of Koulibine. Where will you find this richness ? I see only the first dawnings of the awakening intellect, only a cunning worthy of brutes rather than of men. Instinct ! Is that any thing to boast of ? Take an ant in the forest, and carry it away from its ant-hill ; if you put it on the ground, it will immediately turn toward home. A man can not do the same ; is it because he is inferior to the ant ? Instinct, even in its highest manifestations, is not a characteristic of human nature ; what distinguishes man is simple and pure good sense. That is our portion, our just source of pride. As for Koulibine, who, without knowing any thing of mechanical science, made a very poor clock, I would expose his clock upon the pillory, with this inscription : 'Look, good people, this is the way you ought not to work.' Koulibine is not to blame, but his method is not worth a straw. I am willing to praise Telouchkine for the boldness and skill which he displayed in his work upon the spire of 'The Admiralty ;' but do not tell me that

he has shown his superiority to the German architects, and that they are good for nothing but to pocket money. He is not superior to them ; he had to go to them to have the spire repaired after it had been injured. For Heaven's sake, do not try to spread the idea in Russia, that we can achieve success without proper preparation. No, even if your brow be seven spans in width, study, beginning with the alphabet, or else remain quiet and say nothing. Oh ! it excites me to think of these things."

Potoughine took off his hat and began to fan himself with his handkerchief.

"Take the fine arts," continued Potoughine, "and Russian manufactures ! I am familiar with Russian boasting and also with Russian weakness, but Heaven help me, I have never met with a true specimen of the fine arts. For twenty years, we have knelt before Brulof, that miserable pretender, and have imagined that he had founded a school superior to all others. . . . Russian fine arts ! oh ! oh ! oh !"

"Excuse me, Sozonthe Ivanovitch," said Litvinof, "but will you not make an exception in the case of Glinka ?"

Potoughine began to scratch his head.

"Exceptions, you know, only prove the rule. Even

in this case, however, we have not been able to dispense with boasting. If we had been satisfied with saying that Glinka was really a remarkable musician, and that nothing but circumstances and his own faults had prevented his becoming the founder of Russian opera, no one would have disputed us ; but no, we can not speak within bounds. We at once had to raise him to the highest rank, to call him the leader of the musical profession, to pretend that other nations could show no one to compete with him. And as a proof of this, we compare him with some great genius, whose 'sublime productions' are only a pitiable imitation of foreign composers of the second order . . . . of the second order, notice ; it is very easy to imitate them. Oh ! unfortunate barbarians who look upon perfection in art, as they look on the feats of the mountebank Rappo ; a muscular foreigner can lift six *puds* with one hand—we will find some one who can lift twenty. You see in foreign countries they have nothing to compare with us. With your permission, I will here relate a little incident which has just come to my mind. Last spring, I visited the Crystal Palace at London ; in that building, as you know, are collected specimens of all kinds of inventions ; it is, so to speak, an encyclopedia of humanity. As I was walking

among all these machines and implements, and gazing at all the statues of great men about me, this thought came to my mind : if any nation were suddenly to disappear from the surface of the globe, and if, at the same time, every thing which this nation had invented were to vanish from this building, our dear, good mother, orthodox Russia might bury herself in Tartary, without making the slightest disturbance. Every thing would remain quietly in its place ; for the *samovar*, the bark shoes, and the knout—our most important productions, these even were not invented by us. The disappearance of the Sandwich Islands would produce more effect ; their inhabitants have designed certain lances and canoes ; their absence would be noticed by the visitors. All our early inventions came from the East, all our late ones from the West, and still we continue to dilate on the originality of our art and our national productions. Some young philosophers have even discovered a Russian science, a Russian arithmetic. Two and two make four here as elsewhere, but more completely, it appears."

"But stop a moment, Sozonthe Ivanovitch," cried Litvinof. "We have sent some articles to the World's Fair, and Europe buys many of our productions."

"Yes, some animal products ; but just notice this,

sir, that these animal products are good only as a result of unfortunate circumstances. Our hogs' bristles, for instance, are long and stiff, because the animals themselves are lean; our leather is strong and thick because the cattle are poor; our tallow is solid because pieces of flesh are mixed in with it. But why should I say more on this subject; you have studied technology and understand all this better than I. I hear of Russian ingenuity. Well, here are our farmers complaining bitterly and suffering immense losses because they have no drying-machine, which will take the place of the ovens in which they have been accustomed to dry their sheaves since the time of Rurik; these ovens cause a fearful waste, and have to be kept burning all the time. The farmers complain, and yet there are no drying-machines. Why is this? Is it not because Germany does not need them? The wheat there is threshed while moist; consequently they do not make such a machine, and we are not able to design it. Hereafter, whenever I meet one of these rough diamonds—one of these original and inventive geniuses—I will cry out, 'Where is the drying-machine?' But they would care little for that! We are well able, indeed, to pick up the worn-out shoes of Saint-Simon or of Fourier, to put them on our heads

and carry them about as relics ; we can even write a little article on the historic and contemporary value of the proletariat in the chief cities of France. One day, however, I asked one of these writers on political economy, a person something like M. Vorochilof, to name for me twenty of these same cities, and the result was, that in order to make up that number, our friend was forced to mention Montfermeil, which he remembered, thanks to a novel of Paul de Kock. I have just thought of another incident. I was one day entering a wood with my dog and gun."

"You are a sportsman then?" inquired Litvinof.

"On a small scale. I was looking for snipe in a swamp, which I was told was much visited by sportsmen. I entered a wood which some merchants had bought for clearing. As is customary, they had built in it a little shed with a counter in front. Before the door there stood a clerk, as smooth and sleek as a hazel-nut ; he was giggling all by himself." I asked him where the swamp and snipe were to be found. 'Come with me,' he said, with as joyful an expression as though I had given him a rouble ; 'this swamp is a fine one, and abounds in all kinds of wild birds.' I followed his directions, but found no wild birds, not even any swamp ; it had been drained a long time be-

fore. Will you be kind enough to tell me why the Russians always lie, the clerk as well as the political economist?"

Litvinof's only answer was a sigh.

"Commence a conversation with the latter," continued Potoughine, "upon the most difficult problems of social science, even those where the data are few and uncertain, . . . prrrr! he starts off like a bird whose wings have just been untied. I once succeeded in trapping one of these birds; I used an excellent bait, as you will see. I was discussing with one of the young men of the day various questions, as they call them. As they usually do, he grew very excited; among other things he inveighed against marriage with a truly boyish pertinacity. I submitted certain arguments to him. . . . I might as well have talked to a wall. I was finally about to close the conversation, when a happy idea came to me. 'Will you permit me to make a remark?' I said to him—with these neophytes you must always be respectful—'you surprise me very much, sir. You have studied natural science, but do not seem to have noticed one remarkable phenomenon. All carnivorous and predatory animals, birds of prey and beasts of prey, work to obtain food for their young as well as for themselves . . . Now, you class man among these

animals?' 'Certainly,' replied the youth, 'man is a carnivorous animal.' 'And predatory,' I added. 'Predatory too,' he said. 'That is admitted then,' I replied. 'I am only surprised that you have never noticed that these animals all live in pairs.' The neophyte was completely taken aback. 'How is that?' said he. 'Judge for yourself; look at the lion, the wolf, the fox, the vulture. How can it be otherwise, if you will think a moment; it is all that the pair, together, can do to find nourishment for their young.' Our neophyte became thoughtful. 'In this case,' he answered, 'the animal is not a type for man.' Then I called him an idealist. This so mortified him that he was ready to burst into tears; I had to calm him by promising to say nothing about it to his companions.

It is no small thing to merit the title of idealist! You see, sir, the young men of to-day are making a great mistake. They imagine that the time of laborious and obscure work is past; that it did very well for their fathers to dig like moles, but that this is too humiliating work for them. They must fly in the open air. . . Dear little doves! even your children can not be thus free from labor, and as for you, you had better return to your ditches and holes, and continue the blind work of your fathers."

There was a moment of silence.

“As for me, sir,” Potoughine resumed, “not only am I persuaded that we owe to civilization all that we possess of science, art and justice, but I also affirm that the love of the beautiful and poetry can only be formed and developed under the influence of this same civilization; and that what is called national and spontaneous development is but foolishness and absurdity. Even in Homer you can find traces of a luxuriant and refined civilization. Love itself becomes purified by its influence. The admirers of the Slavic race would gladly hang me for such a heresy, if they had not such tender hearts. I will not desist, however; and though Madame Kokhanoski may offer me her idyls of the Slave, in which his simple nature is highly exalted, I will not consent to inhale this triple extract of the Russian *moujik*. I do not belong to that elevated circle in society which, occasionally, thinks it necessary to persuade itself that it has not really become French in nature, and for the exclusive use of which this Russia-leather literature is composed. I repeat that there can be no true poetry without civilization. Would you like to become acquainted with the poetic ideals of ancient Russia? Look at our legends. Love is never represented in them as the result of fas

cination or of fate. It is drunk in 'with the waters of oblivion ;' its effect is compared to a dry or frozen land. This is our epic literature, the only one in all Europe or Asia which does not give us a typical pair of youthful lovers. The hero of 'holy Russia' always begins his acquaintance with her for whom fate has destined him by mercilessly abusing her. But I have said enough on this subject ; I will simply call your attention to the picture, which 'our youthful laureate' gives of the ancient and uncivilized Slave. Here it is : he is wrapped in 'a cloak of sable, pointed at every seam ; a sash of many-colored silk circles his form above the waist ; his hands are hidden within his sleeves ; the high collar of his cloak conceals his crimson face and white neck ; his hat is planted on one side ; boots of morocco leather cover his lower limbs ; these boots are long and pointed at the toes, with heels so high, that a sparrow, with outspread wings, can fly beneath the foot.'

"This is the poetical ideal of the uncivilized Russian. Is it not a beautiful type ? Does it offer much material for the painter or the sculptor ? The young girl who captivates this youth, whose complexion resembles the blood of the hare . . . But it seems to me you are not listening."

Litvinof started. The fact was, he was not listening to Potoughine's remarks. He was thinking, persistently thinking of Irene, and his last interview with her.

"Pardon me, Sozonthe Ivanovitch," he said; "I was thinking of another question which I wished to ask you in reference to . . . ."

"To whom?"

"To Madame Ratmirof."

Potoughine folded up his paper and put it in his pocket.

"You still wish to know how I became acquainted with her?"

"No, that is not it; I should like to have you give me an account of her life at St. Petersburg. What are the facts concerning it?"

"I really can not tell you, Gregory Mikhailovitch. I am very well acquainted with Madam Ratmirof, . . . . but the acquaintance was made by chance, and has been of short duration. I have not mingled in the society which surrounds her, and do not know what is going on within it. Some things I have heard, but, you know, gossip is not to be depended on, and I paid little attention to them. I can not help noticing," he added, after a moment's pause, "that you are deeply interested in her."

“Yes; we have talked together twice, seemingly in the frankest manner. I sometimes, however, find myself asking whether she is sincere.”

Potoughine cast his eyes upon the ground.

“When she is excited, she is sincere, like all women of strong passions. Sometimes, also, her pride keeps her from deceit.”

“Is she proud? I supposed she was capricious rather.”

“As proud as Lucifer; that is nothing, though.”

“I have sometimes thought that she exaggerated . . .”

“That is nothing, again; she is sincere all the same. But where do you expect to find the truth? The best of these women are thoroughly corrupt.”

“But, Sozonthe Ivanovitch, remember, did you not speak of her as your friend? Did you not take me to her almost by force?”

“What of that? She begged me to bring you to her. I said to myself, ‘Why not?’ As to friendship, I really am her friend. She has some good qualities; she is kind and generous; that is, she gives to others what she does not want herself. You ought to know her, though, better than I.”

"I knew Irene Pavlovna ten years ago ; since that time . . . ."

"That makes no difference, Gregory Mikhailovitch. Can character change ? What we are in the cradle, that we are at the grave. Perhaps"—here Potoughine bent still further forward—"perhaps you fear that you may be entangled in her snares ? Very likely you may ; it is difficult to escape from such a woman."

Litvinof forced his face into a smile.

"Do you think so ?"

"It is impossible ! The man is weak, the woman persistent, fate is all powerful. It is not easy to enter upon a solitary and gloomy life ; to always continue in it is impossible. Here you have presented to you beauty and sympathy, warmth and light ; how can you refuse the offering ? You spring toward it as a child runs to its nurse. Then come chill clouds of sorrow and despair, and you are whirled in a maze of uncertainty and doubt. At first you knew not how to love, now you know not how to live."

Litvinof looked upon Potoughine ; it seemed to him that he had never seen a being so forlorn and so unhappy. Gloomy and pale, his head bowed upon his breast, his hands crossed upon his knees, he sat motionless, with a bitter smile upon his face. Litvinof

felt his sympathies awakened for this poor and honest, but cynical and eccentric individual.

“Irene Pavlovna,” he said in a low voice, “mentioned among her other friends, one whose name, if I remember rightly, was Belsky or Dolsky. . . .”

Potoughine fixed upon Litvinof a gloomy look.

“Ah!” said he in a low voice, “she mentioned . . . . Well! that is right. But I must go back to the house . . . . to dinner,” he added, with a yawn. “Good-by.”

He rose from the bench and rapidly strode away, before Litvinof could utter a word. The compassion which he had fe't now changed to anger—anger against himself, be it understood. He greatly disliked to wound the feelings of another person; he had desired to express his sympathy for Potoughine, and, instead, had made a most unfortunate allusion. He returned to his hotel with a secret discontent at heart.

“She is thoroughly corrupt,” he kept repeating to himself. . . . . “She is as proud as Lucifer! What! this woman who almost threw herself at my feet! Can she be proud? Proud and not capricious?”

Litvinof tried, without success, to drive from his mind the image of Irene; he tried to think of his betrothed, but all in vain. He at last determined to await

the conclusion of this “strange story.” The end must come soon ; and Litvinof did not doubt but that he would in some way be extricated from his difficulties. Yet the image of Irene would not leave him, and every one of her words returned persistently to his mind.

The waiter brought him a note, which read as follows :

“ If you have nothing to do this evening, come to see me. I shall not be alone ; there will be company with me, and you can gain a better idea of the circle in which I move. I desire very much that you should be present, as I expect there will be an unusual display. You must become more familiar with the atmosphere in which I live. Come ; I shall be glad to see you, and I think you will pass a pleasant evening. Prove to me that our explanation of to-day has rendered impossible any further misunderstanding.

“ Your devoted friend,

I.”

Litvinof changed his coat, put on a white cravat, and started out in answer to this invitation. “ There is no harm in this,” he kept saying to himself, as he walked along. “ Why not become better acquainted with these people ? It will be interesting.” A few days before, it was a feeling of dislike rather than of interest that he had entertained toward them.

He was walking with hurried steps, his hat drawn

over his eyes, and a constrained smile upon his lips. Bambaeff, who was seated before the Café Weber, pointed him out to Vorochilof and Pichtchalkin, and solemnly exclaimed,

“ Do you see that man ? He is a man of stone ! **he is as firm as granite !** ”

## CHAPTER XIV.

Litvinof found a numerous company assembled in the apartments of Irene. In one corner were seated before a whist table three officers of the picnic party: the stout, the irritable and the polite. They were playing whist with a dummy, and language can not express the gravity which they displayed in dealing the cards, taking up the tricks, or leading out their clubs and diamonds. They were real statesmen; they left to the common people all those little pleasantries which ordinarily accompany a game of cards. These gentlemanly officers spoke only in dignified terms, with the exception of the stout one, who once between deals cried out, "That devilish ace of spades!" Among the ladies, Litvinof recognized those who had been present at the picnic; but besides these there were others whom he had never before seen. There was one woman so old that she caused a constant feeling of apprehension among those looking at her, lest she should at any moment crumble into dust. Her shoulders were bare and bore a horrible resemblance to those

of a corpse. Holding her fan before her face, she was casting languishing glances upon Ratmirof, from eyes that looked like those of the dead. Ratmirof paid her every attention; she was highly esteemed in the fashionable world, because she had been the last lady of honor to the Empress Catharine. At the window, in a shepherdess's costume, was seated Countess Ch—, "the queen of the wasps," surrounded by a circle of young men, among whom was the well-known millionaire, the handsome Finikof, who could be readily distinguished by his arrogant manner, his flat skull, and the brutal expression of a countenance worthy of Heliogabalus or a khan of Bokhara. Another lady, also a countess, commonly known by the name of Lise, was conversing with a spiritual medium who had a pale face and long, light hair. By his side, stood another gentleman, who seemed his counterpart; he was smiling and had an air of importance about him. Besides being a medium, he possessed the gift of prophecy, and interpreted with equal facility the Apocalypse and the Talmud. None of his predictions were ever realized, but this did not trouble him at all; he continued to prophesy just the same.

At the piano was seated the rough diamond, who had so exasperated Potoughine; he was striking chord after

chord in a careless manner, looking meanwhile about the room. Irene was seated on a divan between Prince Coco and Madam X—, an ex-belle and literary character, noted for being as pious as once she was wicked : the holy oil had now somewhat diluted the old poison. On seeing Litvinof, Irene blushed, rose and, as he drew near her, shook him hurriedly by the hand. Her dress was of black crape sprinkled with threads of gold, and displayed to good advantage the snowy whiteness of her skin. Her face shone with resplendent beauty, which was enhanced by a secret, almost exultant joy, sparkling in her half-closed eyes and playing about her rosy lips.

Ratmirof approached Litvinof and, after exchanging with him a few commonplaces which did not seem to bear the imprint of his usual good nature, presented him to the old ruin, the queen of the wasps and Countess Lise. They greeted him with great politeness. Litvinof did not belong to their circle, but he made a good impression ; his expressive features and his youthful looks attracted their attention. He did not, however, know how to take advantage of this gracious reception ; he was not accustomed to society, and was ill at ease, more especially as he felt constantly fixed upon him the insulting stare of the stout officer.

"Ah ! low fellow—free thinker?" this stare seemed to say, "so you have wormed yourself in among us ! Must we give you our hands to kiss?" Irene came to Litvinof's relief. She managed so adroitly that he found himself shut off in a corner of the room near the door, just behind the chair in which she was sitting. In speaking to him she had to turn her head, and each time that she leaned toward him, he was dazzled by the graceful contour of her snowy neck, and thrilled by the faint fragrance of her hair. Irene's face wore a calm but grateful expression. He could not be mistaken; it was gratitude to him that he saw there, and he felt himself trembling with happiness and delight. Her eyes seemed constantly to ask him, "What do you think of my friends?" Litvinof more particularly noticed this whenever any of the company said or did some silly thing, which happened more than once in the course of the evening. On one occasion, she could not control herself at all, but broke out in a hearty peal of laughter.

Countess Lise, being very superstitious and having great faith in the marvelous, after having talked for a long time with the pale medium about Home, that subject being at length exhausted, asked him if there

were any animals that could be brought under the influence of magnetism.

“I know of one at least,” cried Prince Coco from the other end of the room. “You know Milvanosky? He was put to sleep before me, and in a second he was snoring . . . he, he!”

“You are very sarcastic, Prince; I was speaking of animals, of beasts.”

“I was also speaking, madam, of a beast.”

“There are some so influenced,” answered the medium; “lobsters, for instance: they are easily acted on by the magnetic fluid.”

The countess manifested great surprise.

“What! lobsters! is it possible? How strange! I should like very much to see it. Monsieur Loujine,” she added, turning toward a young man with a doll’s face and a collar as stiff as a board, (he was very proud of having moistened these collars in the spray of the Falls of Niagara and of the Nile, but remembered nothing else of all his travels, and seemed fond of nothing but Russian puns;) “Monsieur Loujine, will you be so kind as to order a lobster for us?”

M. Loujine bowed.

“Do you wish it brought in *quick or quickly?*”

The countess did not understand.

“A lobster,” she repeated, “a lobstier.”

“What is a lobster?” in a harsh tone, asked Countess Ch—.

The absence of M. Verdier irritated her; she could not understand why Irene had not invited this most charming of French gentlemen. The old ruin, who for a long time had understood nothing of what was going on (she had the advantage of being deaf), also shook her head in a disapproving manner.

“Oh! you will understand. Monsieur Loujine, I requested you . . .”

The young traveler bowed, went out and soon returned, followed by a waiter, who, with a suspiciously solemn face, brought in an immense lobster on a platter.

“Here it is, madam,” said Loujine; “now we can proceed with *the operation for cancer*. Ha! ha! ha!” (Russians are always the first to laugh at their own jokes.)

“He! he! he!” answered Prince Coco, in his character of patriot and patron of home productions.

We must here beg the reader to forgive us. Who can say, but that in the Alexandra Theatre he may sometimes have applauded a worse pun?

“Thank you! thank you!” said the countess.  
“Now, M. Fox, we are ready.”

The waiter placed the platter on a small round table. There was a murmur of expectation throughout the room; all heads were anxiously bent forward excepting those of the officers at the whist table, who still retained their usual dignified and solemn air. The medium ran his fingers through his hair, frowned and, approaching the table, began to make passes in the air before him. The lobster stirred, and opened and shut its claws; the medium made quicker passes, the lobster continued the same movements as before.

“What ought it to do?” asked the countess.

“It ought to rest quietly and raise itself upon its tail,” replied M. Fox, with an American accent, moving his hands rapidly over the platter. The fluid, however, did not seem to act: the lobster continued to claw about. The medium declared that he was not in proper condition and moved from the table with a disappointed air. The countess endeavored to console him, telling him that even M. Home was not always successful. Prince Coco at once confirmed what she said. The amateur in the *Apocalypse* and *Talmud* stealthily approached the table, and tried his fortune, making sever-

al quick passes over the lobster, but without success ; it would not be put to sleep.

The waiter was called and took the lobster out, snickering as he left the room. In the kitchen also there was a loud laugh *über diese Russen.*

The rough diamond had continued to strike his chords during the whole of this performance, confining himself, however, to the minor keys . . . . the nerves of the crustacea might be subject to this charm, he thought. He now played his one eternal waltz, and, of course, was warmly applauded. Stung with envy, Count X—, our incomparable *dilettante*, (see the first chapter,) sang a song of his own composition, borrowed entirely from Offenbach. The sportive refrain : “*Quel œuf ! quel œuf !*” caused all the ladies to move their heads in time with the music ; one of them lightly applauded with her hands, and from every mouth was heard the inevitable, “How beautiful !” Irene exchanged glances with Litvinof, and an expression of irony passed over her face. A moment afterward this expression became still more marked, and was even tinged with something like malicious pleasure, when Prince Coco, the representative and defender of the interests of the nobility, began to explain his opinions to the medium, and naturally seized the opportunity to intro-

duce his celebrated phrase on the overthrow of the rights of the property holder in Russia. The American blood of the medium boiled in his veins ; he immediately began an excited discussion. The Prince, as usual, tried to drown his adversary's voice, constantly shouting, " That is absurd ! That is not common sense !" instead of arguing the question. The rich Finikof made several silly speeches, without himself understanding what he said ; the Talmudist whined ; even Countess Ch—— threw herself into the midst of the strife. The confusion and discord was almost equal to that which Litvinof had witnessed in Goubaref's room, the main difference being that here there was no tobacco smoke or beer, and the company were more richly dressed. Ratmirof endeavored to restore order, (the officers were exhibiting their dissatisfaction, Boris remarking, " Those devilish politics again !"). He did not succeed, however, and a statesman of moderate views, who was present, was requested to review the whole question in a few words. He endeavored to do so, but met with little success. The truth was, he so stumbled and stammered, so failed to seize the arguments, and so permitted every one to see that he did not understand the question that no other result could have been expected. Irene now began to fan the flame

and to excite each party against the other, at the same time looking at Litvinof with an amused expression. Litvinof seemed under the influence of a charm: he paid no attention to what was passing around him, and seemed only waiting for those glorious eyes to gaze into his own, and for that beautiful, brilliant and alluring face to turn toward him. Finally, the ladies demanded that the discussion should cease. Ratmirof requested the *dilettante* to repeat his song; then the rough diamond played his waltz again.

Litvinof remained till midnight, lingering till every one else had gone. The conversation during the evening had touched upon a great variety of subjects, always, however, avoiding every thing that was of real importance. After finishing their stately game, the officers mingled with the company, and the influence of these statesmen could at once be seen. They began by speaking of the chief celebrities of the *demi-monde*, whose names and accomplishments seemed well known to all; they then referred to Sardou's last play, to About's story, and criticised Patti's singing in *Traviata*. The stout officer stated that once when asked the question, "What is love?" he had answered, "A colic of the heart," and immediately burst into a harsh laugh. The old ruin tapped him on the hand with her fan,

and by this unwonted display of energy, knocked off from her forehead a piece of the plaster with which her face was covered. The literary lady named over the various Slavic tribes, and spoke of the necessity of establishing the orthodox religion on the Danube ; but she received no encouragement to continue her remarks. They talked of Home more willingly than of any other subject ; the queen of the wasps even condescended to tell a story of how she had seen spirit hands suddenly appear upon her lap, and how she had placed her ring on one of them. Irene easily secured Litvinof's attention ; for, even if he had been more disposed to notice what was taking place about him, he could not have selected from all this confused talk one sincere word, one worthy thought, or one new fact. Even their shouts and violent exclamations did not seem sincere ; there was no depth of feeling even in their calumnies. While groaning over the sad destiny of their country, they were really sorry only on account of the probable reduction of their own incomes ; fear for their own safety had taken hold upon them, and the mention of names which will be remembered by posterity, caused them to grind their teeth with rage. What paltry desires and vain trifles influenced all these people ! and influenced them not alone during this

evening and in this society, but at their homes, every day and every hour ! What perfect ignorance they displayed of every thing that is true and noble !

On taking leave of Litvinof, Irene pressed his hand again, while she whispered in his ear in a confidential tone,

“Are you satisfied ? Are you pleased with what you have seen to-night ?”

He did not answer, but silently bowed and went away.

Left alone with her husband, Irene was moving toward her room, when he motioned her to stay.

“I greatly admired you this evening, madam,” he said, as he leaned against the mantelpiece, smoking a cigarette ; “you made fine sport of us.”

“No more so than I always do,” she quietly replied.

“What am I to understand by that ?” asked Ratmirof.

“Whatever you please.”

“Hum ! that is plain enough.”

Ratmirof carefully knocked off the ashes of his cigarette with the end of his little finger.

“By the way, your new acquaintance, what is his name ? . . . M. Litvinof ? I suppose he has the reputation of being a man of great intelligence.”

At the name of Litvinof, Irene turned quickly round.

“What do you mean?”

The General smiled.

“He is always so quiet . . . . It looks as though he were afraid of compromising himself by speaking.”

Irene smiled now, but in a very different manner from her husband.

“It is better to say nothing than to talk as some men do.”

“Good!” answered Ratmirof, with feigned good-nature. “Joking aside, though, he has a very interesting face, a thoughtful expression, and a general appearance . . . .” Ratmirof stopped to arrange his cravat. “I presume he is a Republican like your other friend M. Potoughine; he is another mute genius.”

Irene’s brows were slowly raised, her large eyes shone fiercely, her lips were tightly drawn together.

“Why do you talk so, Valerien Vladimirovitch?” she said in a tone of pretended pity. “You are only beating the air. . . . We are not in Russia, and no one is listening to you.”

Ratmirof lost his temper in spite of himself.

“I am not the only one, Irene Pavlovna,” he an-

swered in a hollow voice, "I am not the only one that thinks this gentleman a Carbonaro."

"Indeed ! What others think so?"

"Boris, for one. . . ."

"What ! has he considered it necessary to express his opinion ?"

Irene's form shook as though from cold ; she began stroking her shoulder with her finger tips.

"Yes, he has. . . . But permit me to observe, Irene Pavlovna, that you are angry, and when you are angry, you know . . . ."

"I, angry ? at what ?"

"I do not know ; perhaps you were displeased with the remark that I made in reference to . . . ."

Ratmirof stopped.

"In reference to whom ?" imperatively demanded Irene. "Quick, answer me ! I am tired and want to get to sleep."

She took up a light that stood upon the table.

"In reference to whom ?" she repeated.

"Why, in reference to M. Litvinof. I can now no longer doubt that you are greatly interested in him . . ."

Irene raised her hand until the light which she held shone full in her husband's face ; she looked him in

the eyes attentively and curiously, and then suddenly began to laugh aloud.

“What do you mean?” asked Ratmirof with a frown. “What do you mean?” he repeated, stamping his foot. He felt that he had been insulted and humiliated, but the beauty of this woman standing before him, with such an air of easy confidence, dazzled while it pained him. Not one of her charms escaped his observation ; even to the rosy reflection of her taper fingers in the dark bronze of the lamp which she held. He noticed even this reflection . . . . and the insult sank still deeper in his breast.

Irene continued to laugh.

“What! you! you are jealous?” she cried at last ; and turning her back on her husband, she left the room. “He is jealous!” he heard her say again, after the door had closed, with a fresh burst of mocking laughter.

Ratmirof watched his wife disappear, with a gloomy look. He could not help noticing the perfect symmetry of her form, the seductive grace of every motion. He knocked the fire from his cigarette, by striking it against the marble mantel, and threw it angrily across the room. His cheeks paled, his face twitched nervously, his eyes glared about the room in a wild and brutal manner ; it seemed as though they were seeking for something on

which to wreak revenge. All traces of refinement had left his face ; he must have looked like this when flogging the peasants of White Russia.

Meanwhile Litvinof had returned to his room ; seated in a chair before his table, and resting his head upon his hands, he remained for a long time motionless. At last he rose, took a portfolio from his trunk and drew from it a picture of Tatiana. Photography makes almost any face look old and ugly, and that of Tatiana now seemed gazing sorrowfully upon him.

Litvinof's betrothed was a young girl of pure Russian blood, with fair complexion and well rounded face and form ; her features were somewhat large, perhaps, but were lighted by a peculiarly frank and kind expression , her eyes were of a clear brown hue, and a gleam of sunshine seemed always resting on her pure white brow.

Litvinof remained for a long time with his eyes fixed upon the picture, but at last he pushed it from him and again buried his head in his hands. "It is all over !" he murmured. "Irene ! Irene !" He now knew that he loved Irene passionately, desperately ; that he had loved her from the time of their meeting at the Old Castle, that from that moment he had not ceased to think of her. How surprised, how incredulous he would

have been, how he would have smiled, indeed, if any one had predicted this a few short hours before.

“But Tatiana, Tatiana! . . . God help me!” he cried in agony.

And still the image of Irene, robed in her dark and gloomy dress, but with a face white as marble and resplendent with the calm consciousness of **victory**, remained constantly before him.

## CHAPTER XV.

Litvinof did not sleep at all that night; he did not even take off his clothes. The air seemed close and almost suffocating to him. As an honorable man, he fully appreciated the value of truth and the sacredness of duty, and was ashamed to attempt to deceive himself, or to try to excuse his weakness and wrong-doing. At first he fell into a kind of stupor; for a long time he was weighed down by some undefined but painful feeling; then he was seized with terror at the thought that his future which had seemed so bright was now covered with dark clouds, that the plans which he had formed were already crumbling. He began to pitilessly upbraid himself; but soon his feelings changed again. "How cowardly I am!" said he. "It is no time to reproach myself; I must act. Tatiana is my betrothed; she confides implicitly in my honor; we have promised to love each other forever; nothing can, nothing shall divide us." He recited to himself all Tatiana's virtues, and repeated them over one by one; he tried to arouse sorrow and contrition in his heart. "There is but one thing

for me to do," he thought : " to fly, fly at once, without awaiting her arrival, to intercept her before she reaches Baden. Shall I be unhappy with Tatiana ? I do not think so ; at all events, I must not question, must not even think of this. I will do my duty though I die for it !" " But you have no right to deceive her," another voice seemed to say, " you have no right to conceal from her the change that has taken place in your heart ; if she knew that you loved another, she would perhaps not wish to become your wife." " It is not true," he answered, " it is only a temptation to shameless deception and bad faith ; I have no right to break my promise, none at all ! But must I go, without seeing Irene again? . . . . ."

It seemed to Litvinof that his heart would break ; a cold shudder ran over him ; his body was like ice, his teeth were chattering ; he remained for a moment without strength or motion. At last turning from this thought, striving, as it were, to strangle it, he asked himself how it happened that he could again be fascinated by a woman so worldly and corrupt, and surrounded as she was by those who were so repugnant to him. " Can it be really true ?" he asked himself. His only answer was a gesture of despair.

And while these thoughts were passing through his

mind, suddenly that charming face appeared as in a cloud to his enraptured vision ; he saw again those beaming eyes shooting from beneath their dark and silky lashes, burning and triumphant glances ; again those graceful, queenly shoulders rose before him from out the fragrant and mysterious shadows which surrounded them. . . .

Finally, when morning came, Litvinof had formed a resolution. He decided that he would go that very day to Tatiana, and in a last interview with Irene, would tell her the whole truth, if she required it, then bid her farewell forever.

He packed every thing, waited till noon, then started out to call upon Irene.

But when he saw her half-closed blinds, his courage failed him ; he could not make up his mind to enter the hotel, and strolled into the *Allée Lichtenthal*.

“ I have the honor of presenting my regards to M. Litvinof,” suddenly cried, in a mocking tone, a voice which seemed familiar to him.

Litvinof looked up and saw General Ratmirof perched on top of a stylish dog-cart by the side of Prince M. . . , a well-known sporting character. The prince was driving ; the general was leaning toward Litvinof, and was slowly and politely raising his hat. Litvinof returned his bow, and an instant after, as

though obeying some mysterious mandate, walked hastily toward Irene's hotel.

She was at home. He gave his name and was received at once. When he entered, she was standing in the centre of the room. She had on a morning dress with large and flowing sleeves ; her pale face betrayed a want of sleep. She held out her hand, and looked upon him with a gracious but abstracted glance.

“Thanks for coming so soon,” she said in a wearied tone, as she dropped into an arm-chair standing near. “I am not very well to-day ; I passed a sleepless night. How were you pleased last evening ? Was I not right ?”

Litvinof took a seat.

“I have come, Irene Pavlovna,” he began . . .

She started and gazed attentively at Litvinof.

“What has happened to you ?” she cried. “You are as pale as death. Are you sick ? What has happened ?”

Litvinof was confused.

“Can you ask what has happened, Irene Pavlovna ?”

“Have you received bad news ? Something has happened ; will you not tell me ?”

Litvinof, in turn, looked upon Irene.

“I have received no news,” he answered, after a moment's struggle ; “but a misfortune has come upon me, a

great misfortune . . . . and that is what has brought me here."

"A misfortune? What can it be?"

"I have . . . ."

Litvinof endeavored to say more, but it was impossible. His hands were clenched so tightly that the nails seemed piercing through the flesh. Irene leaned forward in breathless expectation.

"Oh! I love you!" suddenly cried Litvinof with a groan, as though the words were torn violently from him.

He turned away and hid his face

"What, Gregory Mikhailovitch . . . . you . . . ."

Irene stopped and, resting against the back of her chair, buried her burning face in her hands.

"You . . . . love me?"

"Yes . . . . yes . . . . yes!" he repeated in a hoarse voice, turning his face more and more away from her.

There was a deathly stillness in the room, broken only by the flutterings of a butterfly, caught between the curtain and the window-pane. Litvinof was the first to speak.

"This, Irene Pavlovna, this is the misfortune which has come upon me, which I might have foreseen and

avoided, if I had not been caught by a rushing torrent, as I was at Moscow. It seems my fate to suffer again, through you, those torments which I thought could never be renewed. . . . I have striven against this passion again and again ; but it is impossible to conquer fate. I tell you this, in order more quickly to end this . . . . this tragi-comedy!" He uttered these last words with a fresh outburst of anger and of shame.

Litvinof ceased speaking. The butterfly was still beating its wings against the window-pane ; Irene's face was still hidden in her hands.

"Are you not deceiving me?" . . . . These words were spoken through fingers as ghostly white as though every drop of blood had left them.

"I am not deceiving myself," answered Litvinof in a sad tone. "I love you as I never loved before. I will not reproach you, that would be absurd ; I will not even say that this, perhaps, might not have happened, if you had acted in a different manner toward me. . . . Doubtless, I alone have been to blame--my own imprudence has been my ruin, and I am justly punished ; doubtless, you could not have foreseen this, you could not have known that I should have been much less in danger, if you had not accused yourself of wrong, and expressed

your desire to make amends. . . . But why should I recall the past? I have only to make known to you my present position—that surely is sufficiently painful. There can now exist between us no misunderstandings—as you have said—and I hope that the very frankness of my confession will somewhat diminish the annoyance which you must feel."

Litvinof still spoke with his eyes cast down; if he had looked upon Irene, he could not have seen her face, for she kept it hidden in her hands. The emotions which that face betrayed would probably have startled him: there were imprinted upon it terror and joy, a strange composure and an agitation which was stranger still. Her eyes were partly hidden beneath their half-closed lids, and her breath seemed tremulously to come and go between her motionless and pallid lips.

Litvinof was silent awaiting a reply. "I have now only to say farewell," he said at last.

Irene let her hands fall slowly down.

"But, if I remember rightly, Gregory Mikhailovitch, that . . . . that person of whom you spoke to me, is coming soon to meet you here?"

"Yes; but I will write to her. . . . She can stop somewhere on the way, . . . . at Heidelberg, for instance."

"Ah ! at Heidelberg . . . yes . . . that would answer very well. But this will interfere with your plans. Are you sure, Gregory Mikhailovitch, that you are not mistaken, that this is not a false alarm ?"

Irene spoke calmly, almost coldly, pausing slightly between each word, and turning her face away from him.

Litvinof did not answer her.

"Why do you speak of annoying me ?" she continued ; "I do not feel injured. Not at all ! If either of us is at fault, it is not you ; or, at all events, not you alone. . . . Think of our talks together, and you will see that you are not to blame."

"I never doubted your generosity," said Litvinof with compressed lips, "but I should like to know if you approve of my decision."

"To go away ?"

"Yes."

Irene was still looking away from him.

"At first your decision seemed too precipitate. . . . Now that I have thought on what you told me ; . . . if you are sure that you are not mistaken, I suppose it will be best for you to go. It will be better . . . for us both."

Irene's words became fainter and fainter as she spoke.

“True, General Ratmirof might notice . . . .” Litvinof began to say.

Irene cast down her eyes ; a strange trembling appeared about her mouth—appeared, then quickly passed away again.

“No, you do not understand me,” she interposed. “I was not thinking of my husband—why should I? He has noticed nothing. Nevertheless, I think that we had better part.”

Litvinof picked up his hat, which had fallen on the floor.

“This is all,” he thought, “now I must go.” “I have only to take leave of you, Irene Pavlovna,” he said aloud, while his heart ceased beating for a moment. “I can only hope that you will not retain too unpleasant an impression of me ; and that if ever . . . .” Again he was compelled to stop.

“Wait, Gregory Mikhailovitch, do not yet bid me farewell ; it is too unexpected.”

Litvinof for a moment felt a thrill of joy, but immediately after a bitter sadness filled his heart.

“I can not remain,” he cried. “Why should I prolong this torment?”

“Do not yet bid me farewell,” Irene repeated. “I must see you once more . . . . Another silent separa-

tion as at Moscow? . . . . No, I can not consent to it. You now may leave me, but give me your word of honor that you will call again before you go away from Baden."

"Do you really wish it?"

"I demand it. If you go away without seeing me, I will never, never forgive you. How strange this seems!" she added, as though speaking to herself. "I can not believe that I am here in Baden . . . . I seem to be at Moscow. . . . Now you must leave me."

Litvinof rose.

"Irene Pavlovna," he said, "give me your hand." Irene shook her head.

"I told you I did not wish to say farewell . . . ."  
"I do not so intend it."

Irene held out her hand toward him but, upon looking at him . . . . for the first time since the avowal of his love, she hastily drew it back.

"No, no," she murmured, "I will not. No, no."

Litvinof bowed and left the room. He could not understand why Irene had refused his hand at parting, nor why she had so suddenly changed her mind. As he disappeared, Irene sank into her chair again, and covered her face with both her hands.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Litvinof did not return to his room ; he went into the mountains, and penetrating a dense and tangled thicket, threw himself down with his face toward the ground, and remained thus motionless for nearly an hour. He did not moan nor weep ; a dull lethargy had seized upon him. He had never before felt such a painful and intolerable sense of the vanity of life. He did not think of Irene nor of Tatiana. He had but one feeling : the ax had fallen, the cable by which he had been moored was parted, and he was being borne away by some cold, mysterious current. Sometimes a whirlpool seemed engulfing him, and he seemed tossing and turning in its dark vortex. . . .

In the midst of all, however, his determination remained unshaken. He never once hesitated as to leaving Baden. Already, in thought, he was seated in the train, rushing on with lightning speed toward a barren and desolate land. He rose at last, and resting against a tree, stood lost in thought, with one hand mechanically swaying a long fern which was growing at his side.

The sound of approaching footsteps roused him from his reverie ; two wood-cutters with enormous loads upon their shoulders were descending the steep path.

“ It is time to act,” he muttered.

He followed the wood-cutters down the path, went to the railway station and sent a telegram to Tatiana’s aunt, Capitoline Markovna. It informed her of his immediate departure, and requested her to meet him at the Schrader Hotel in Heidelberg.

“ If it must be done,” he thought, “ I will act quickly, and not wait until to-morrow.”

He then passed into the gambling-hall, cast a dull glance upon the players, noticed in the distance the ugly head of Bindasof and the solemn countenance of Pichetchalkin, and after resting a moment in the portico, walked leisurely toward Irene’s hotel. It was not a sudden impulse which led him there : having determined to go away, he had also resolved to keep his promise, to see her once again and say farewell forever. He entered the hotel without being seen by the porter, ascended the stairs, meeting no one on the way, pushed open the door and, without knocking, entered the room. Irene was seated as he had left her, in the same chair, the same dress and the same position. It was very evident that she had not moved during all this time.

She slowly raised her head and, seeing Litvinof, started and nervously grasped the arm of her chair.

“ You frightened me,” she said.

Litvinof gazed upon her in mute surprise. He was struck by the expression of her face and by the appearance of her eyes which were swollen and dimmed with tears. Irene, with a painful smile, began to arrange her hair, which had fallen in disorder about her face.

“ How long have I been here ?” she asked. “ I must have fallen asleep.”

“ Excuse me, Irene Pavlovna,” said Litvinof, “ I have come in unannounced . . . . I wished to fulfill my promise to you. As I am going away to-night . . . .”

“ To-night ? But you told me that you would first write a letter . . . .”

“ I have sent a telegram instead.”

“ Ah ! you are in haste. . . . When do you leave ? I mean at what hour ?”

“ At seven o’clock.”

“ At seven ? Have you come now to say farewell ?”

“ Yes, Irene Pavlovna.”

Irene was silent for a moment.

“ I ought to thank you, Gregory Mikhailovitch,” at

last she said ; "it probably was painful for you to return again."

"It was painful, Irene Pavlovna."

"Life always has its trials, Gregory Mikhailovitch ; do you not think so ?"

"Perhaps so, Irene Pavlovna."

Irene was again silent ; she seemed lost in thought.

"You have given proof of your friendship by returning," she said at last. "I thank you. I approve of your desire that we should separate as soon as possible . . . . because all delay . . . . because . . . . because I, whom you accuse of caprice, whom you have called an actress in a comedy ; I think that is what you meant . . . ."

Irene rose suddenly and taking another chair, leaned forward and rested her face and hands upon the table.

"Because I love you !" she murmured in a trembling voice.

Litvinof staggered as though a dagger had pierced his breast. Irene restlessly moved her head about, now hiding her face in her hands, and now resting it upon the table.

"Yes, I love you . . . . and you know it."

"How could I know it ?" at length asked Litvinof.

"Now, you see, you must surely go," continued

Irene. "We must not hesitate, you nor I. It is dangerous, it is terrible. . . . Farewell," she added, quickly rising from her chair, "farewell!"

She moved slowly toward her room, and throwing back her hand, waved it toward him as though she would grasp his own; he stood motionless where she had left him, as though riveted to the floor. Again she said, "Farewell, forget me!" and, without turning her head, disappeared within the room.

Left alone, Litvinof could scarcely recover from his confusion. He succeeded at last, however, and running to the door which she had closed upon him, called her by name, again and again. . . . His hand was already on the latch, when the voice of General Ratmirof was heard in the vestibule of the hotel.

Litvinof pulled his hat low down upon his brow, and quickly descended the stairs. The exquisite general was standing before the porter's gate, explaining to him in rather poor German, that he wished to hire a carriage for the whole of the next day. Perceiving Litvinof, he raised his hat again in a stately manner, and again presented "his regards." It was very evident that he was making sport of him; but Litvinof cared little for it. He returned Ratmirof's salutation with a slight bow,

hurried to his room, and sat down by his trunk which was already packed and locked.

His head was whirling, his body trembling like a leaf. What had happened to him? Could he have foreseen it?

Yes, he had foreseen it all, improbable as it may appear. It had come upon him like a thunderbolt, but he had nevertheless expected it, though he scarcely dared confess it to himself. Nothing, however, seemed clear to him. All was uncertainty and confusion; he had, for the time, lost all control over his thoughts. His memory went back to Moscow . . . . there, too, every thing had been swept away as by a whirlwind. His breathing was quick and painful. A feeling of triumph, of desperate, barren triumph, oppressed and tortured him. Nothing in the world could have induced him to forget the words that had escaped from Irene's lips. But why? These words could not change his fixed determination. As before, this determination was not shaken, but held him as firmly as the anchor holds the ship. Litvinof had lost control of his thoughts . . . . he was still, however, master of his will, and planned for himself as though he were a helpless stranger. He rang for the waiter, asked for his bill, and secured a seat in the omnibus; he burned

intentionally all his vessels. "I will do my duty though I die for it," he said, repeating his phrase of the night before. This phrase seemed particularly to please him. "Though I die for it," he kept repeating, while walking up and down the room. Sometimes he closed his eyes and almost ceased to breathe, when Irene's words returned to him, seeming to burn into his very soul. "One can not really love but once," he thought; "another's life is bound up with your own, and from it you can not free yourself. Love is a fatal poison burning in the veins. But is this so? is there no remedy? Happiness . . . . is that possible? You love her? . . . . She . . . . she loves you . . . ." At this point began a violent struggle with himself. Like the traveler who, in the darkness of the night, fearful of losing his way, and seeing a faint light before him in the distance, will not for a moment lose it from view, so Litvinof endeavored to concentrate all his faculties upon one plan. To meet Tatiana; no, (he trembled at this thought,) rather to arrive as soon as possible at Heidelberg, at the hotel which he had designated; this was the faint and distant light to him. What would then happen, he did not know and did not care to know; this was the only course for him to take. "I will do my duty though I die for it," he repeated

again and again as he kept looking at his watch. It was after six o'clock. He had not long to wait, and meanwhile kept walking to and fro. The sun was setting, and the western sky was glowing with a ruddy light. A subdued reflection of this glory came through the narrow windows of the room, which was filling fast with twilight shadows. Suddenly it seemed to Litvinof that the door was quickly opened and as quickly closed; he turned his head and saw a woman standing near him, her form concealed beneath a dark, loose cloak.

"Irene!" he cried, clasping his hands and bending toward her.

She bowed her head and, stepping forward, fell upon his breast.

An hour later, Litvinof was seated in his room, alone. His trunk stood open and empty before him; its contents were tumbled in disorder on the floor. On the table was a letter from Tatiana which he had just received. It informed him that, her aunt having entirely recovered from her sickness, they had determined to leave Dresden before the appointed time and, if nothing should happen to prevent, they would arrive the next day, at noon, at Baden. She added that they trusted he would meet them at the depot. Litvinof had already been to the office of the hotel and engaged apartments

for them. The same evening he sent a short note to Irene, and the next morning received the following reply :

“ Sooner or later,” she wrote, “ this was inevitable. I can only repeat what I told you last night, ‘ My fate is in your hands, do with me as you will.’ I leave you perfect freedom ; only know that if you require it, I will leave all and follow you wherever you may go. To-morrow we will meet again.”

## CHAPTER XVII

Among those waiting at the depot, the next day at noon, was Litvinof. A few minutes before, he had met Irene ; she was in an open carriage with her husband, and another older gentleman. She saw Litvinof. The expression of her eyes grew dreamy as she gazed, but she quickly concealed her face from him with her parasol.

A great change had taken place in Litvinof since the day before ; in every attitude and motion, in the very expression of his face, he felt himself another man.

All calmness, dignity and self-respect had vanished ; only the ruins of his moral nature remained ; the indelible impressions of the last few days had entirely blotted out the good resolutions of the past. He experienced a new, strange and powerful sensation, which was exceedingly painful to him. An evil spirit had penetrated the sanctuary of his soul, and had silently taken possession there ; it had become his master, and he felt its power. Litvinof was ashamed no longer : he felt the rashness of despair mingled with fear. Those captured

in battle are familiar with this conflict of feeling ; the thief experiences it after his first attempt in crime. Litvinof had been taken captive, his honor had been unexpectedly attacked and had not proved equal to the trial.

The train was a few minutes behind time. Litvinof's anxiety grew very painful ; he could not remain quiet for a moment ; pale as a ghost, he mingled with the crowd, striving to hide himself from view. "What if she should not come to-day," he thought . . . . His first glance at Tatiana, and her first look on him, this was what he awaited with impatient dread. And after that? After that let what would happen ! He could form no plan, he could no longer answer for himself. His oft-repeated phrase of the day before came to his mind : it was with such feelings that he was now waiting for Tatiana. . . . .

A long whistle was heard at last, and the train approached with diminished speed. The crowd pushed forward ; Litvinof followed, staggering like a drunken man. Already the faces of the passengers could be distinguished ; Capitoline Markovna was waving a handkerchief from the window of her coach. There could be no further hesitation ; she had seen Litvinof, and knew that he had recognized her. The train stopped. Litvinof ran to the door and opened it. Tatiana was standing beside

her aunt, and with a gentle smile, gave him her hand. He helped them to alight, made some disconnected and commonplace remarks, immediately took their checks, put their shawls and cloaks upon his arm, and ran off to obtain a porter and engage a carriage for them. The noise and confusion which surrounded them was a great relief to him. Tatiana stood quietly where he had left her, and with a smiling face was calmly waiting for his hurry to be over. Capitoline Markovna, on the other hand, could not keep still a moment ; she could not believe she was in Baden. Suddenly she cried, " Oh ! the umbrellas ! Where are the umbrellas, Tatiana ? " —all the time forgetting that she herself was carrying them safely under her arm. Then she was a long time saying good-by to a lady whose acquaintance she had made between Heidelberg and Baden. This lady was no other than our old friend, Madame Soukhantchikof. She had gone to Heidelberg to have an interview with Goubaref, and had now just returned with her " instructions." Capitoline Markovna was dressed in an odd-looking plaid cloak, and wore a round traveling-hat, shaped like a mushroom, which left her short, white hair exposed to view.

She was of medium height and very slender ; being excited by the journey, she spoke in Russian, with a

nasal and sing-song voice. Every body was looking at her.

Litvinof at last succeeded in placing her and Tatiana in a carriage, and took a seat opposite them. The driver whipped up his horses. Then questions were asked, hands were shaken, and smiles and compliments exchanged. Litvinof breathed more freely: he had succeeded better than he had hoped. Nothing in his appearance seemed to have surprised or troubled Tatiana. She was still looking at him calmly and confidingly, sometimes slightly blushing, sometimes laughing merrily. He determined at last to look upon her boldly, not with side-glances as heretofore. As he gazed upon her, an involuntary pity took possession of him: the calm expression of that pure, confiding face created within him a deep remorse. "You have come, poor girl," he thought, "you whom I have so much desired to see, with whom I hoped to pass the remainder of my life; you have come, trusting me, while I . . . I . . ." Litvinof's head sank on his breast. Capitoline Markovna, however, gave him no further time for painful thought, but began plying him with questions. . . . . "What building is that with pillars in front? Where do they gamble? Who is that going by? Tatiana, Tatiana, look at those hoops! Who is that lady? There

must be a great many ladies from Paris here. Goodness ! what a pretty hat ! I suppose we can find every thing here that we could in Paris, only at a much higher price. Ah ! what a clever lady I met on the train ! You know her, Gregory Mikhailovitch ; she told me that she met you at the house of a noted Russian gentleman. She promised to come to see us. How she handles the aristocrats ! it is wonderful to hear her. Who is that gentleman with gray mustaches ? The King of Prussia ? Tatiana, Tatiana, look ! there is the King of Prussia ! No ? It is not the King of Prussia ? It is the ambassador from the Netherlands ? I did not understand, the wheels make so much noise. Oh ! what beautiful trees !”

“Yes, aunt, they are very beautiful,” remarked Tatiana ; “and how bright and gay every thing looks ! Does it not, Gregory Mikhailovitch ?”

“Very gay . . . .” he answered shortly.

The carriage stopped at the hotel. Litvinof took the tired travelers to the rooms which he had engaged for them, and promising to return in an hour, went to his own room. As soon as he had entered it, he was again overpowered by that mystic influence, from which, for the last few moments, he had been free.

Irene was here the queen. Every thing recalled her

to his thoughts. He took from his bosom her handkerchief which he had hidden there, and pressed it to his lips, while passionate memories, like subtile poison, ran through his veins. He knew that his power of choice was gone—that he could not now turn back ; the sorrowful compassion which had been aroused within him at the sight of Tatiana melted like snow before a fiery blast, and all remorse and penitence seemed dead ; even the necessity for further hypocrisy and deceit no longer revolted him. Passion had usurped the place of duty, law and conscience. He, who had always been so prudent and so careful, now formed no plans for the future, except in endeavoring to extricate himself from a position, the horror and absurdity of which caused him but little anxiety and pain ; it seemed to him as though he were planning for another.

An hour had scarcely passed, when a waiter brought him a message from the ladies ; they requested him to join them in the parlor. He followed their messenger and found them with their hats on ready for a walk. They both wished to profit by the fine weather, and to take a first glance at Baden. Capitoline Markovna, especially, was burning with impatience, manifesting a little ill-humor even, on being informed that it was not yet time for the people of fashion to assemble before

the *Conversationhaus*. Litvinof offered her his arm, and the regular promenade commenced. Tatiana walked by her aunt's side, and looked about her with silent curiosity. Capitoline Markovna renewed her questions. At the sight of the roulette-table and the dignified looking *croupiers*, whom, if she had met them elsewhere, she would certainly have taken for ministers ; at the sight of their little rakes always moving, and gathering in the piles of gold and silver heaped upon the green cloth, about which women, both old and young, were gambling, Capitoline Markovna fell into a silent ecstasy. She entirely forgot that it was her duty to express her indignation, and could not see enough of what was going on, as her heart beat quickly with each new call of the numbers. The humming sound of the ball in the roulette-table thrilled her through and through. It was only on her return to the open air that she was, at last, enabled to speak, with a profound sigh, of games of chance as a demoralizing invention of the aristocracy. A forced and unpleasant smile was visible on Litvinof's face ; he spoke occasionally with an air of assumed ease, but really seemed irritated and annoyed. Once, on turning toward Tatiana, he nearly lost all self-possession : she was looking fixedly upon him and seemed endeavoring to read upon his face what it was that troubled him. He

hurriedly nodded to her, as though to assure her that all was well, but she still continued to look upon him with a wistful and wondering expression.

Litvinof now turned away from the *Conversationhaus*, and avoiding "the Russian tree," under which he noticed two of his countrymen already stationed, entered the *Allée Lichtenthal*. Scarcely had they begun their walk in this direction, when in the distance he saw Irene walking toward him ; she was accompanied by her husband and Potoughine. Litvinof grew pale ; he did not change his pace however, and when they met, bowed without speaking. She returned his salutation coldly, and casting a scrutinizing glance on Tatiana, passed quickly on. Ratmirof politely raised his hat, while Potoughine murmured a few unintelligible words.

"Who is that lady ?" asked Tatiana, speaking for the first time since they commenced their walk.

"That is Madame Ratmirof," answered Litvinof.

"A Russian ?"

"Yes."

"Did you become acquainted with her here ?"

"No, I have known her for a long time."

"How handsome she is !"

"Did you notice her dress ?" said Capitoline Mar-kovna. "The cost of her laces alone would support ten

poor families for a year. Was that her husband with her?" she added, turning toward Litvinof.

"It was."

"He must be very rich?"

"I do not know, but do not think he is."

"What is his rank?"

"He is a general."

"What strange eyes she has!" said Tatiana; "so dreamy yet so piercing; I never saw their like before."

Litvinof did not reply; he thought he still felt the inquiring gaze of Tatiana fastened upon him. He was mistaken; her eyes were cast upon the ground.

"Heavens! who is that monster?" suddenly cried Capitoline Markovna, pointing to a basket-wagon, in which was carelessly reclining a red-haired, pug-nosed woman, dressed in gaudy colors, and displaying to view a pair of lilac stockings.

"That monster? Why that is the celebrated Mamzelle Cora."

"Who?"

"Mamzelle Cora, a Parisian celebrity."

"What! that fright? Why, she is very ugly!"

"That does not seem to make any difference."

Capitoline Markovna let her arms fall at her side

“Well, Baden is a strange place. Can I sit down on this bench? I am a little tired.”

“Certainly; that is what the benches are placed here for.”

“What do I know of your customs? I have heard that there are benches, also, on the boulevards in Paris, but that it is not proper to sit upon them.”

Litvinof did not attempt to enlighten Capitoline Markovna on this subject. He saw that they were in the very spot where he had had his definite explanation with Irene . . . then he remembered that he had just noticed a small, red spot on Irene’s cheek. Capitoline Markovna took possession of the bench, Tatiana sat down beside her, and Litvinof stood near them on the walk. Was it his imagination, or was it really true that something indistinct and shadowy was gradually drawing between him and Tatiana.

“What a scarecrow!” continued Capitoline Markovna, shaking her head compassionately. “If her dress were sold, it would support a hundred families instead of ten. Did you notice the diamonds in her red hair? Diamonds in the morning?”

“Her hair is not red,” said Litvinof; “she dyes it in order to follow the fashion.”

Capitoline made another gesture of astonishment, and

then began to ponder. "At home, in Dresden," she continued, "we have not yet descended to such folly. I suppose it is because we are further from Paris. You agree with me, Gregory Mikhaïlovitch, do you not?"

"I?" answered Litvinof. "What the devil is she talking about?" he thought. "I? Oh! of course . . . certainly . . ."

At this moment a measured step was heard, and Potoughine approached the bench.

Litvinof immediately seized him by the hand.

"Good-day, good-day, Sozonthe Ivanovitch, I believe I just met you with . . . a moment ago, I mean, on the promenade."

"Yes, I believe you did."

Potoughine bowed respectfully to the ladies on the bench.

"Permit me to present you to some good friends, relatives of mine, who have just arrived in Baden. Potoughine, Sozonthe Ivanovitch, one of my countrymen, also a guest at Baden."

The two ladies bowed. Potoughine returned their salutation.

"There is a regular medley here," began Capitoline Markovna, in her falsetto voice; the excellent old lady

was very timid, but always made great efforts to conceal the fact. "Every body seems to come here."

"Baden is a pleasant place," answered Potoughine, as he cast a side glance at Tatiana; "a very pleasant place."

"Yes, but it is very aristocratic, if my opinion is correct. We have always lived in Dresden; that is a very interesting city, while here there is a regular medley."

"The word seems to please her," thought Potoughine. "Your remark is perfectly correct," he said, "but then the scenery here is grand, and the situation is very picturesque. Your companion must appreciate this. You are pleased, I think?" he added, this time directly addressing Tatiana.

Tatiana turned full upon Potoughine her gentle, lustrous eyes. She seemed trying to discover why Litvin-of had introduced her, on the first day of her visit, to this stranger, whose face seemed honest and intelligent enough, and who was looking on her with politeness and attention.

"Yes," she finally said, "it is very pleasant here."

"You must visit the Old Castle," continued Potoughine; "above all I advise you to go to Ibourg."

"Saxon Switzerland . . ." began Capitoline Markovna . . .

The sound of trumpets interrupted her ; it was the Prussian military band from Rastadt, (in 1862 Rastadt was still a federal fortress,) which was beginning its weekly concert at the pavilion. Capitoline Markovna rose at once.

“ The music,” she said, “ the music at the *Conversation* ! We must go. It is four o’clock, is it not ? ”

“ Yes,” answered Potoughine ; “ this is the hour of music and of fashion.”

“ We must hurry, Tatiana ; come ! ”

“ Will you allow me to accompany you ? ” asked Potoughine, to Litvinof’s great surprise ; the thought that he might have been sent by Irene had never once entered his mind.

Capitoline Markovna smiled. “ With great pleasure, Monsieur . . . Monsieur . . . ”

“ Potoughine,” said the latter, offering her his arm. Litvinof gave his to Tatiana, and the two couples walked toward the *Conversationhaus*.

Potoughine continued talking with Capitoline Markovna, while Litvinof walked on without opening his lips ; twice only he smiled without any apparent cause, and once he feebly pressed Tatiana’s hand ; she did not return the pressure, and Litvinof could not but feel how utterly false he was. That hand-clasp did not

express the mutual trust of two loving hearts ; he had wished it to take the place of those words which he could not utter. The mysterious cloud which had drawn between them seemed to become, each instant, more distinct. Tatiana was again looking at him with an attentive, almost searching gaze. This condition of affairs did not change at all, at the little table before the *Conversationhaus*, about which the four were seated ; except that in the midst of the crowd and the noise of the music, Litvinof's silence appeared less extraordinary. Capitoline Markovna's head was completely turned ; Potoughine found it a difficult task to answer her questions and satisfy her curiosity. Fortunately for him, the thin face and staring eyes of Madame Soukhantchikof appeared suddenly in the crowd. Capitoline Markovna recognized her at once, called her to their table, made her sit down and immediately burst into a flood of talk. Potoughine turned toward Tatiana, and began to converse with her in a slow, smooth tone, looking on her with a gentle smile ; Tatiana, to her own surprise, felt perfectly at ease as she answered him. It seemed a relief to her to talk with this gentleman, although he was a perfect stranger. Litvinof, during this time, remained in the same position, with the same pitiful and meaningless smile upon his lips.

At last the dinner-hour arrived, the music ceased, and the crowd gradually strolled away. Capitoline Markovna took leave of Madame Soukhanthchikof, with many expressions of respect. She evidently held her in high esteem; afterward she told her niece that though she was very well informed, she thought her, perhaps, a little too enthusiastic. As regarded the sewing-machines, they would have to procure one immediately after the wedding. Potoughine, also, now took leave of them, and Litvinof escorted the ladies back to the hotel. As he was entering the door, a note was handed to him; he stepped aside and hurriedly tore off the envelope. The following words were written, in pencil, on a little scrap of perfumed paper: "Come to me, for one moment, this evening at seven o'clock; come, I beg of you!" Litvinof thrust the note into his pocket and, turning round, smiled again. . . At whom, and why? Tatiana had turned away from him.

They dined together at the *table d'hôte*. Litvinof sat between Capitoline Markovna and Tatiana. He began at once to talk in a lively strain, to tell stories, and pour out the wine, keeping the ladies' glasses constantly filled. He had suddenly assumed, with strange vivacity, such a trifling tone that an officer of the Strasburg garrison, with Napoleonic mustaches, who was

seated opposite him, thought himself privileged to take part in the conversation, and finally proposed a toast to *the health of the handsome Muscovites*. After dinner, Litvinof accompanied the ladies to their room; he remained there for a moment, standing by the window, with a gloomy expression on his face, then suddenly remarked that he had an engagement to attend to, but would certainly return later in the evening. Tatiana did not speak, but her face grew pale and her eyes fell. Capitoline Markovna always took a nap immediately after dinner, and Tatiana knew that Litvinof was aware of this fact. She had hoped that he would profit by it and remain with her, for she had not been alone with him a single moment since her arrival, and there had been no opportunity to ask him for an explanation. And now he was going away! How was she to interpret this, and all that had happened during this first day of their reunion?

Litvinof hurried away without waiting for a reply; Capitoline Markovna lay down upon the sofa, and after sighing once or twice, fell into a tranquil slumber; Tatiana took a chair in a corner of the room, and sat there motionless, with her arms crossed upon her bosom.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Litvinof mounted the staircase of the *hôtel de l'Europe*. A little girl about thirteen years of age, with a cunning, Kalmuck face, who evidently was watching for him, stopped him suddenly, saying in Russian, "Please step in here, Irene Pavlovna will be here in a minute." He looked at her and seemed in doubt. She smiled, repeated the same words, ushered him into a small room half filled with trunks, the room opposite Irene's, and disappeared, carefully closing the door behind her. Litvinof had scarcely time to regain his composure, when the same door opened suddenly and disclosed Irene, in a ball dress of rose-color, with pearls on her neck and in her hair. She seized both his hands, and gazed into his eyes, without speaking, for a moment; her eyes were glistening and she was panting, as though she had just run hurriedly up the stairs.

"I could not receive you below," she began in a low tone; "we are just starting for a dinner-party; I wanted to see you for a moment. . . . Was that the lady to whom you are engaged, that I saw you with this morning?"

"Yes, that was the one to whom I was engaged," answered Litvinof, with a strong emphasis on the word "was."

"I wanted to see you a moment, to tell you that you are perfectly free, that I do not require you to change your plans. . . ."

"Irene!" cried Litvinof, "why do you talk so to me?"

He spoke these words in a loud voice, and in a tone of insensate passion. Irene closed her eyes a moment.

"Ah!" she answered in a lower tone, though moved by what seemed an irresistible impulse, "you know not how I love you, but I have now only paid my debt, and endeavored to atone for my former wrong to you. I could not give you back my youth, but I have burdened you with no obligation and bound you by no promise. Oh! my darling, do what you will, you are free as air; nothing, nothing need bind you to me!"

"But, Irene, I can not live without you," murmured Litvinof; "I am yours forever. I can not live excepting at your feet."

He rested his head upon her hands. Irene gazed for a moment upon his form, thus bowed before her.

"Know then," she answered, "that I am ready to

risk all, that I will suffer no compunctions to deter me. What you bid me I will do. I am yours . . . for ever."

Some one was tapping lightly on the door. Irene bent forward and again murmured, "I am yours . . . farewell!" Litvinof felt her warm breath in his hair, but when he raised his head she had disappeared, and he heard only the rustling of her dress in the hall, and the impatient voice of Ratmirof, crying, "Will you never come?"

Litvinof sank down upon a trunk that stood beside him, and placed his hands before his face. A faint perfume lingered on them; Irene had clasped his hands within her own. "I can not longer bear this," was his thought. At this instant, the little girl entered, and with a frightened look said, "Will you please go now, before . . ." He rose and quitted the hotel. He could not think of returning to his room at once; he must first collect his scattered thoughts. His heart was beating slowly and irregularly; the earth was rocking beneath his feet. Litvinof entered the *Allée Lichtenthal*. He knew that the decisive moment had arrived, that he could no longer put it off by concealment or evasion, that an explanation with Tatiana was inevitable. But how could he enter upon it? He bade adieu

to all the happy and useful plans which he had formed ; he knew that he was about plunging headlong from a precipice, yet this was not what chiefly troubled him. He had become reconciled to his fate, but how could he present himself before his judge ? If he had really to appear before a judge, before an angel with a flaming sword, his guilty heart could have, perhaps, endured it ; but he felt that he must strike this blow himself. It was fearful to think upon. He might yet go back and profit by the freedom which had been offered him. No ! better death, better a thousand times. Freedom ! The sound was hateful to him. He would rather fall and grovel in the dust, if those eyes would only cast their burning, loving glance upon him . . .

“ Gregory Mikhailovitch !” said a solemn voice, while a hand was laid heavily upon his shoulder.

He turned about with a startled air, and saw Potoughine standing by him.

“ Excuse me, Gregory Mikhailovitch,” began the latter with his customary grin, “ perhaps I am intruding on you, but, seeing you, I thought . . . . If you have any thing else to do though . . . ”

“ Oh no ; I am delighted to meet you,” grumbled Litvinof.

Potoughine commenced walking by his side. “ What

a beautiful evening !” he continued ; “ how warm it is ! Have you been walking long ?”

“ No ; only a little while.”

“ I do not know why I asked the question ; I saw you leaving the *hôtel de l’Europe*.”

“ Have you been following me ?”

“ Yes.”

“ Have you any thing to say to me ?”

“ Yes,” replied Potoughine, in a tone almost inaudible.

Litvinof stopped suddenly and, turning round, measured from head to foot this man who had thus forced his society upon him. Potoughine’s face was pale and his look was wandering ; an expression of hopeless sorrow was plainly marked upon his sad and mournful features.

“ What do you wish to say to me ?” said Litvinof, slowly, as he resumed his walk.

“ I . . . pardon me . . . I will tell you soon. Let us rest a moment on this bench ; it is a better place to talk.”

“ There is something strange in this,” said Litvinof, seating himself at his side. “ You are not in your accustomed humor, Sozon the Ivanovitch.”

“ You are mistaken, I assure you ; I am very much as

usual, and have no secrets to confide to you. I only wished to speak . . . of the impression which your future wife has made upon me . . . the lady to whom you introduced me is the one to whom you are engaged, is she not? I must confess that I have never, in all my life, met a more pure and gentle nature. She has a heart of gold and an angelic disposition."

Potoughine said this in a sad and bitter tone, so that Litvinof could not but notice the discrepancy between his manner and his words.

"Your impression concerning Tatiana Petrovna is perfectly correct," he answered, "but I am somewhat surprised. . . first, that you should understand so well my relations toward her, then, that you should so correctly describe her character. She has, indeed, an angelic disposition, but excuse me if I ask whether that was the subject on which you wished to speak with me?"

"It would be impossible not to understand her nature," hastily replied Potoughine avoiding the question thus put to him ; "one look in her eyes reveals it all. She is worthy of a happy future : and the man who is called upon to share it with her is greatly to be envied. He should show himself deserving of such a fate."

Litvinof frowned. "Excuse me, Sozonthe Ivano-vitch," he said, "our conversation is taking a strange

direction . . . I should like to know if your last words are intended to refer to me?"

Potoughine did not answer Litvinof at once; it was evident that a struggle was taking place within him. "Gregory Mikhailovitch," he said at last, "if I have not misjudged you, the truth is always welcome to you, though it come in such a way as to cause you pain. I said just now that I saw you leaving . . . ."

"The *hôtel de l'Europe*. Well, what of it?"

"I know whom you met there."

"Yes, I met Madame Ratmirof. What of that?"

"What of that? . . . You, who are engaged to Tatiana Petrovna, met Madame Ratmirof whom you love . . . and by whom you are loved."

Litvinof sprang to his feet; the hot blood mounted to his face. "What do you mean?" said he angrily. "Is this a silly joke, or are you a spy upon my track? What do you mean?"

Potoughine looked sorrowfully upon him. "I do not wish to offend you, Gregory Mikhailovitch; my feelings you can not wound, they are no longer sensitive to pain."

"I am wrong, perhaps. I am willing to believe that your motives are good enough. I do not understand, however, what right you have to meddle with a stranger's

private life and feelings, or what reason you can have for imagining what you have just stated to me."

"Ah! Gregory Mikhailovitch, if this were the result of my imagination, it would not have thus affected you. As regards my right to speak to you, any one has the right to save a drowning man."

"I am greatly obliged for your interest in my welfare," quickly answered Litvinof, "but I can live without it, and as regards all those truisms concerning the wickedness of the world, the dangers which surround inexperienced young men, *et cætera*, I look on them as truisms, and in a certain sense despise them. I beg of you, therefore, not to disturb yourself, but to let me drown in peace."

Litvinof was breathing hurriedly, his lips were trembling; Potoughine looked upon him for a moment, then placing his hand upon his breast, replied:

"Look at me, young man! Do I resemble a moralist or a preacher? Can you not understand that it is not my interest in you, however great that may be, which has led me thus to speak to you, to give you occasion to accuse me of that which I despise above all else, meddling and impertinence? Can you not see that the man before you has been broken down and irrevocably ruined by the very passion from which he seeks to save

you, and . . . by the very woman that you pretend to love?"

Litvinof fell back a step.

"What? what is that? You . . . you . . . Sozon-the Ivanovitch? But Madame Belsky? that little girl? . . ."

"Oh! do not question me upon that subject . . . It is a sad, a terrible story, which I will not try to tell you. I scarcely knew Madame Belsky; that child is not mine. I did all, because *she* desired it, because it was essential to *her* safety. Should I now be in Baden, do you think, were *she* not here? Do not think that it is only from regard for you that I thus warn you. I pity that beautiful and good young girl, who loves you. What interest can your future have for me? I fear for *her* . . . I fear for *her*."

"I feel highly honored, Monsieur Potoughine," said Litvinof, "but as, according to your own account, we are both in the same position, why do you not act yourself in accordance with your good advice; why may I not attribute your anxiety to another cause?"

"Jealousy, I suppose you mean! Ah! young man, young man, you ought to be ashamed to thus misunderstand me, to thus pervert the meaning of my words. You are mistaken, we do not occupy the same position.

I am an old man, harmless and eccentric, while you . . . But why should I make further comparisons? You would not, for a moment, play the part which I thankfully accept. Jealousy? He who is without hope can not be jealous, and it is too late for me now to begin to hope. I feel only fear . . . fear for her. Could I have possibly foreseen, when she first sent me to you, that what she called sorrow for her wrong to you would have led her on to such a step as this?"

"Excuse me, Sozonthe Ivanovitch, but you appear to know . . ."

"I know nothing and, at the same time, I know all. I know," he added as he confronted Litvinof, "I know where she was yesterday. It is impossible to stop her in her headlong career. I am not foolish enough, either, to suppose that what I say will hold you back . . . you to whom such a temptation . . . but why should I say more? My only excuse for what I have already said, is that I could not help it. I could not but hope that perhaps you would reflect upon your course, perhaps you would try not to ruin her, and destroy forever the happiness of that innocent, loving girl . . . Ah! do not grow angry and impatient with me. Why should I not speak frankly with you? I am not moved by jealousy or hate. I would fall at your feet if I could thus

influence you . . . Now, farewell. What I have told you is a secret between us two. I do not wish to injure you."

Potoughine walked rapidly away, and was soon lost to view in the deepening twilight ; Litvinof did not endeavor to detain him.

My story is dark and terrible, Potoughine had said to Litvinof, at the same time refusing to relate it. We will give it in few words.

Eight years before this time, he had been temporarily on duty with Count Reuzenbach. It was in the summer. Potoughine took his papers to the count's country seat and passed many days there. Irene was then living with the count. She was not haughty toward those of lower rank ; more than once, the countess had reproved her for her improper, *Muscovite* familiarity. Irene quickly discovered the intelligence of this modest clerk, imprisoned in a straight coat buttoned to the chin. She often stopped and talked pleasantly with him, and he became passionately, deeply and mysteriously enamored of her. Mysteriously, as *he* thought. The summer passed away ; his services were no longer needed by the count. Potoughine was separated from Irene, but found that he could not forget her. Three years afterward, a lady, whom he knew but slightly, sent

him a request to call upon her. This lady, after much digression and after exacting from him a solemn promise that he would never reveal what she was about to tell him, made him a proposition to marry a lady of high rank, for whom marriage had become a necessity. She would not name the other parties interested, but promised that money should not be wanting. Potoughine was not angry—he was astonished rather,—but naturally refused at once. The intriguing woman then placed in his hands a short note from Irene. “ You are a true and faithful friend,” she wrote, “ I know that you will do for me what I ask. I require a sacrifice from you. You can save a being who is very dear to me. In saving her, you save me also. Ask me no questions concerning this. There is no one else whom I would ask to do it; to you, I give my hand and say, do this for me.” Potoughine read the note and answered that he certainly would refuse nothing to Irene Pavlovna, but that he preferred to hear the request from her own lips. An interview took place that very evening; no one knew of it but this lady and themselves. Irene had before this left Count Reuzenbach.

“ Why did you select me for this?” asked Potoughine. She began to compliment him on his sterling qualities, then suddenly changing her manner, said :

"No, I will not hide from you the truth. I knew that you loved me, and that is why I chose you thus to help me."

Then she told him all. Eliza Belsky was an orphan ; her relatives hated her and were plotting to wrest from her her fortune . . . if this plan which was now proposed should not be carried out, she would be ruined forever. Potoughine gazed silently and long upon Irene, and finally consented. She burst into tears and fell upon his neck. He too wept . . . but his tears were very different in their nature. Every thing was prepared for a secret marriage, a powerful hand had removed all obstacles, when suddenly a little girl was brought into the world ; the mother had taken poison. What was to be done with the child ? Potoughine took it under his charge from Irene's hands.

A frightful, terrible story ! Let us leave it, reader !

An hour had passed before Litvinof made up his mind to return to his hotel. He had nearly reached it, when he suddenly heard footsteps behind him ; some one seemed following him, and as he hastened his pace, this person also walked more rapidly. As he passed beneath a lamp, Litvinof suddenly turned about and recognized General Ratmirof. He was returning alone from the dinner-party. He was elegantly dressed ; a

rich cloak was thrown across his shoulders ; he wore a white cravat, and a medal hung from his button-hole by a golden chain. He was staring straight at Litvinof, and there was such an expression of defiant scorn and hatred in his face, that Litvinof deemed it advisable to advance at once upon him. As he drew near, however, the general's expression suddenly changed ; his mock politeness again returned, and a hand covered with a neatly fitting glove deftly raised his faultless hat. Litvinof returned the compliment without a word, and each one went his way. "He begins to be suspicious," thought Litvinof. "It is some one else, perhaps," said the general to himself.

Tatiana was playing piquet with her aunt, when Litvinof entered their room.

"You are a nice young man," cried Capitoline Markovna, as she threw her cards upon the table ; "this is our first day here, and we have seen you scarcely at all. First we waited, then we scolded . . ."

"I said nothing, aunt," remarked Tatiana.

"Oh ! we know that you are very patient ! Are you not ashamed, sir ? Can a man who is engaged act so ?"

Litvinof made such excuses as he could, and drew near the table.

“Why have you stopped your game?” he asked after a short pause.

“What a question! we were only playing because we had nothing else to do. . . . Now you have come . . .”

“If you would like to hear the evening concert, I shall be pleased to take you there,” he answered interrupting her.

Capitoline Markovna gave her niece an inquiring glance.

“If you wish to go, aunt, I am ready,” said she; “but will it not be pleasanter to remain at home?”

“I think so. We will have some tea in the Muscovite fashion, and will have a nice, confidential talk together; we have had no good opportunity before.”

Litvinof ordered the tea, but found that he could not enter into the conversation with any spirit. A feeling of remorse was constantly gnawing at his heart; it seemed to him that every word he spoke was false, and that Tatiana knew it to be so. No change, however, was apparent in her demeanor, except that her timid glance seemed to avoid Litvinof, and that she was paler than usual. Capitoline Markovna asked her if her head ached.

Tatiana was about to give a negative reply, but, after thinking a moment, she answered, “Yes, a little.”

“ You are probably tired by the journey,” remarked Litvinof, blushing as he spoke.

“ Yes ; I am tired,” answered Tatiana, and her glance again seemed trying to avoid him.

“ You must rest yourself, Tanioucha.”

“ I will retire soon, dear aunt.”

The *Traveler's Guide* was lying on the table. Litvinof began to read from it, in a low voice, a description of the environs of Baden.

“ That is all very pleasant,” interrupted Capitoline Markovna ; “ but there is something else we must not forget ; they say that linen is very cheap here ; we must buy some for the *trousseau*.”

Tatiana's glance fell.

“ We shall have plenty of time for that, aunt. You never think of yourself ; you really need a new dress. You see how stylish every body here is.”

“ Oh ! no ; I do not need it ; I am not a fashionable person. It would be different, Gregory Mikhailovitch, if I were a beauty, like your friend. What did you say her name was ?”

“ What friend ?”

“ Why, the one we met this morning ?”

“ Oh ! I know,” said Litvinof, with an air of assumed indifference, and again he felt a blush of shame suffuse

his cheeks. "No," he said to himself; "I can not bear this longer!"

He was seated by her whom he had promised to make his wife, and close to her, in the side pocket of his coat, resting on his breast, was Irene's handkerchief. Capitoline Markovna went into the next room, and left them alone together for a moment.

"Tania," said Litvinof with an effort. . . . It was the first time that day that he had called her by her name.

She turned toward him.

"I . . . I have something very important to say to you."

"When, to-night?"

"No, to-morrow."

"Ah! to-morrow. Very well."

Litvinof was seized by a powerful feeling of pity and remorse. He took Tatiana's hand, and touched it to his lips as though asking her for pardon; her heart sank within her; his action filled her with vague fear and dread.

During the night Capitoline Markovna, who slept in the same room with her niece, suddenly started and raised herself in bed.

"Tania," said she, "are you crying?"

Tatiana did not reply at once. At last she said, in her usual candid manner, "No aunt; I am afraid that I caught cold to-day."

## CHAPTER XIX.

“Why did I say that to her?” thought Litvinof the next morning, as he sat by the window of his room. He spitefully shrugged his shoulders: the fact was he had said it in order to cut off all retreat. Upon the windowsill was a note from Irene. She begged him to call on her at noon. Potoughine’s words kept constantly returning to him; although they had no powerful effect, they irritated him and he could not drive them from his thoughts. Suddenly a knock was heard at the door.

“*Wer da?*” asked Litvinof.

“You are at home, open the door!” answered the gruff voice of Bindasof.

The latch was giving way beneath his pressure. Litvinof turned pale with anger. “You can not come in,” he cried.

“Can not come in? what does that mean?”

“I tell you I can not see you; leave!”

“Well, that is pleasant! I only wanted to borrow a little money of him,” grumbled Bindasof.

He went away, however, striking his heels against

the floor, in his usual manner. Litvinof could scarcely keep from running after him ; he wanted to choke the insolent fellow. The events of the last few days had unstrung his nerves ; a little more and he would have cried. He drank a glass of cold water, shut up all the drawers in the closet of his room, without knowing what he did, and went to call on Tatiana.

He found her alone ; Capitoline Markovna had gone shopping. Tatiana was seated on the sofa, listlessly holding a book which she had not been reading, the name of which, even, she probably did not know. She did not move, but her heart was beating violently, and the trembling of the white collar about her throat was plainly to be seen.

Litvinof appeared confused. He sat down by her and said good-morning with a smile, while she returned without speaking. She had bowed when he had entered in a polite and formal manner, without looking directly at him. He held out his hand ; she placed her cold hand within it, but soon drew it back and took up her book again. Litvinof felt that it would only wound Tatiana to open the conversation with any ordinary topic. As usual with her, she asked no question, but her whole manner seemed to say, "I am waiting." He must now fulfill his promise. Although he had thought

of nothing else all night, he did not know what to say, nor how to break this cruel silence.

“Tania,” he began at last, “I told you, yesterday, that I had something important to say to you. I am now prepared, and I beg you not to be pained by my words, and to believe that my regard for you . . .”

He stopped; his courage failed him. Tatiana had neither moved nor looked at him; she only held her book more tightly.

“Between us,” continued Litvinof without finishing his former sentence, “there has always existed the utmost frankness; I esteem you too much to attempt to deceive you; I wish to show you that I can appreciate the nobleness and independence of your character, and although . . . doubtless . . .”

“Gregory Chailovitch,” began Tatiana in a voice which was calm, although her face became deathly pale. “I will help you: you no longer love me, and you hesitate to tell me so.”

Litvinof trembled.

“Why,” he answered indistinctly, “why do you think so? I do not understand . . .”

“What! is it not so? Tell me! tell me!”

Tatiana turned toward Litvinof; her hair was thrown back, her face almost touched his, and her eyes, which

had so long avoided him, now looked straight into his own.

“Is it not so?” she asked again.

He answered not a word ; not the least sound escaped his lips. He could not have deceived her, even if he had known that she would have believed him, and that a falsehood would have saved him ; he could not even sustain her glance. Tatiana needed no reply, she understood his silence and his guilty, downcast gaze ; she fell back on the sofa and let her book drop from her grasp. Up to this last moment she had hoped, and Litvinof knew it now ; he saw how truly hideous was all that he had done. He threw himself at her feet.

“Tatiana,” he cried, “if you knew how painful it is for me to see you in this position, how I suffer when I think that I have placed you there ! My heart is broken ; I no longer recognize myself ; in losing you, I am lost, and all is ruin, Tatiana, all ! How can I strike such a blow against my dearest friend, my guardian angel ! How can we meet like this, how could we pass a day like yesterday, together ! . . .”

Tatiana moved as though to rise and leave him ; he clung to her dress.

“No ! listen to me a moment more,” he cried. “You see me at your feet, but it is not to ask your pardon : you

can not, you ought not to forgive me. I only wish to tell you that your friend is lost, that he is plunging into an abyss, and does not desire to drag you with him. Can you save me? . . . No, I push you back . . . I am lost, Tania, lost beyond recall!"

Tatiana looked upon him.

"You are lost?" said she, as though she did not understand his meaning. "You are lost?"

"Yes, Tania, lost. All my life, all that is dear to me is lost; all is destroyed, and I know not what awaits me in the future. No, Tatiana, I have not ceased to love you, but a fearful, irresistible desire has seized upon me. I have struggled against it . . ."

Tatania rose frowning, while a shadow passed over her pale face. Litvinof also stood erect.

"You love another woman," she began, "and I know who that woman is . . . We met her yesterday, did we not? There is but one course for me to take. As you say that this feeling is irresistible," (Tatiana paused; she hoped that Litvinof would interrupt her, but he did not speak,) "I can only free you from . . . your promise."

Litvinof bent his head submissively.

"You have reason to be angry," he stammered; "you are right in accusing me of treachery and baseness."

Tatiana again looked upon him.

"I do not accuse you, Litvinof, neither do I condemn you. I agree with you that the truth, however painful, is better than what passed between us yesterday. What a life mine will be now!"

"And mine!" said Litvinof in a sad voice.

Tatiana walked toward the door.

"I beg you to leave me alone a moment, Gregory Mikhailovitch; we will meet again and talk together. This is so unexpected! I can scarcely bear it . . . Leave me . . . We will meet again . . ."

Thus speaking, Tatiana quickly left the room, closing and locking the door behind her. Totally bewildered, Litvinof went out into the street; a great heaviness seemed weighing on his heart; a man who had cut a fellow creature's throat might feel thus. At the same time he experienced a sensation of relief, as though a portion of the burden had been lifted from him. Tatiana's generosity had overpowered him; he felt keenly all that he had lost, but something like anger was mingled with remorse: he was drawn toward Irene as the only refuge left to him, and yet he was angry with her. From day to day, Litvinof's feelings had become more complex and confused; he was tortured and irritated by them, and was, as it were, lost in this chaos. He had but one desire: to take any path, whatever it might be, that would lead

him from this frightful darkness. Men of strong will like Litvinof should never give way to passion ; it destroys their very sense of being . . . But nature will not yield to reason . . . at least to human reason ; it has a logic of its own which we do not understand and will not admit, until we are crushed by it as by a cruel wheel.

After leaving Tatiana, Litvinof had but one thought : to see Irene. He went to her hotel, but the general was at home, at least so the porter told him. He would not enter, for he felt that he could not control himself, and went to the *Conversationhaus* to pass away the time. Vorochilof and Pichtchalkin soon were made aware of the fact that he was in bad humor : he let them understand that he thought the one as empty as a bell, the other as tiresome as a dreary rain ; it was fortunate that Bindasof did not meet him, or there would certainly have been a grosser scandal. The two first-named gentlemen could scarcely contain their wrath. Vorochilof even went so far as to ask himself whether military etiquette did not require him to demand satisfaction, but, like the officer of Gogol, he calmed himself by attacking some bread and butter in the café. Litvinof saw in the distance, Capitoline Markovna, dressed in her queer cloak, running from store to store. He felt ashamed when he thought of the sorrow that he was

about to cause this odd but excellent old lady. Then he thought of Potoughine, and of what he had said the evening before. Suddenly a vague but powerful attraction seemed drawing him ; if a breath from a passing cloud had touched him, it could not have seemed more intangible. Litvinof knew that Irene was approaching. Suddenly she appeared a few steps from him, leaning on another lady's arm. Their eyes met. Irene probably noticed something strange in Litvinof's expression ; she stopped before a store for the sale of clocks from the Black Forest, beckoned to him, as though she wished to show him one of the clocks, the colored dial of which was surmounted by a cuckoo, and said in an ordinary tone, as though she were speaking of the curiosities before them :

“Come in an hour, I shall be alone.”

At this moment, the celebrated M'sieu Verdier approached and fell into an ecstacy of delight over the color of her dress, and the jaunty Spanish hat which came low down upon her brow. . . . Litvinof disappeared among the crowd of people passing by.

## CHAPTER XX.

“Gregory,” said Irene two hours later, “what troubles you? Tell me quickly, while we are alone.”

“Nothing troubles me,” answered Litvinof. “I am happy, that is all.”

Irene cast down her eyes, smiled, and sighed.

“That is no answer.”

Litvinof became thoughtful.

“Well, if you must know,” (Irene’s eyes expanded as she bent toward him,) “I told every thing to Tatiana to-day.”

“What! did you speak of me?”

Litvinof started.

“Irene, how could you think of such a thing? If I . . .”

“Forgive me, I did not mean it. What did you tell her?”

“I told her that I no longer loved her.”

“Did she ask you why?”

“I said that I loved another, and that we had better part.”

“Well, did she consent?”

“Ah! Irene, you do not know what a noble, generous girl she is.”

“I believe you; that was the only course she could have taken though.

“She had not a single bitter or reproachful word for the man who had destroyed her happiness, who had deceived and shamefully deserted her.”

Irene was carefully looking at her finger-nails.

“Did she love you, Gregory?”

“Yes, Irene, she loved me.”

Irene silently smoothed out her dress.

“I must confess,” she said at last, “that I do not exactly understand why you made this explanation to her.”

“What! would you have me deceive so pure a soul? Do you suppose . . . ?”

“I suppose nothing,” said Irene interrupting him. “I confess that I have thought little about her; I can not think of two persons at one time.”

“You mean . . . ?”

“Is she going away, this pure soul?” interrupted Irene again.

“She has not told me,” answered Litvinof. “I am to see her again, but I know she will not remain here.”

“A pleasant journey to her!”

“No, she will not stay here. But I can talk of her no more ; I can only think of what you promised me.”

Irene cast a side glance on him.

“Ungrateful creature ! Are you not contented now ?”

“No, Irene, I am not ; you understand me.”

“You mean, I . . .”

“Yes, you understand me. Remember what you have said and written to me. I can not play a secondary part after all that I have done ; it is not only my own, but another’s life that I have cast down at your feet. I have given up every thing that was dear to me before, and in return for this I believe, I know, that you will keep your promise, that you will leave all and fly with me.”

“If you wish it, I am ready . . .” (Litvinof bent forward and rested his head upon her hands.) “I am ready, I take nothing back. But have you thought of the obstacles in your way ; can you overcome them ?”

“I have thought of nothing ; but only say the word, only give me your consent, and before a month has passed . . .”

“A month ! we leave for Italy in two weeks.”

“Two weeks are time enough. Oh, Irene ! you receive my proposal coldly ; perhaps it seems like a dream to you ; but remember I am no longer a child, and I

never attempt what I can not perform. I know how fearful a step this is, I know I am assuming a great responsibility ; but I can see no other course to take. I must break away from all relations with the past, in order not to appear a miserable liar before that young girl whom I have sacrificed for you."

Irene threw back her head and looked at him with flashing eyes.

"Your pardon, Gregory Mikhaïlovitch. If I do fly, it must be with a man who is willing to make this sacrifice for *me*, and not for the sake of retaining the respect of a cold-blooded girl, with milk and water in her veins. I must confess that this is the first time I have ever heard the object of my regard spoken of as a person to be pitied. I think that a man who does not know his own mind is more deserving of commiseration."

This time Litvinof was angry.

"Irene," he cried . . .

Before he could say more, she rested her brow a moment in her hand, then springing forward and throwing her arms about his neck, clasped him tightly in her embrace.

"Forgive me," she murmured in a choking voice, "forgive me, Gregory. You see how I am spoiled, how

jealous and wicked I am ; you see how much I need your forbearance and your aid. Yes, save me, drag me from this horrible abyss before I am completely lost within it. Let us fly from all who know us here, to some far distant, free and happy home. There, your Irene may prove more worthy of you, more deserving of the sacrifices you have made for her. Do not be angry, forgive me. I will do whatever you may bid me, and go wherever you may lead."

Irene did not loose Litvinof from her impassioned clasp. As she leaned upon his breast, he bent his head above her, and in a transport of gratified and passionate delight, drew her hands from about his neck, and raised them to his lips. "Irene, Irene," he murmured.

Suddenly she raised her head as though listening . .

"I hear my husband's step, he has just gone into his room," she whispered, and rising quickly, she took another chair. Litvinof also started up. "Do not go," she said in a low tone, "he is already suspicious and you will only make him more so. I know you do not fear him . . ." (She kept her eyes while she was speaking fastened on the door.) "Yes, I hear him, he will be here very soon. Say something, talk to me !" (Litvinof had not yet regained his composure and had not spoken a word.) "Are you going to the theatre to-

morrow?" she continued in a loud voice. "They play *le Verre d'eau*, an old play in which Plessis makes horrible faces." "I am on fire," she added in a low tone; "I can not bear this torture long; we must carry out our plans at once. I should have told you before that he has all my money, but I have my jewels with me. We will first go to Spain, if you think best." Again she spoke aloud, "Why is it that all actresses grow so stout? Even Madeline Brohan. Say something, speak! My head is dizzy; but do not fear on my account. . . . I must appoint some place where we can meet to-morrow. I am sorry that you told that young girl . . . . Oh! how delightful!" she suddenly cried aloud, laughing nervously, and tearing the lace border of her handkerchief.

"May I come in?" asked Ratmirof from the other room.

"Of course . . . come in."

The door opened, and the general appeared upon the scene. At the sight of Litvinof he frowned; he bowed to him, however, or rather he stiffly bent his body forward at the hips.

"I did not know that you had company," he said, "I beg pardon for intruding. Are you still pleased with Baden, *M'sieu* . . . Litvinof?"

Ratmirof always hesitated before pronouncing Litvinof's name ; he acted as though he had forgotten it, and feared that he might get it wrong. He imagined that he wounded Litvinof's pride by this pretended forgetfulness, as well as by the exaggerated politeness with which he always greeted him.

"I am not yet tired of the place, *M'sieu* . . . Ratmirof."

"Indeed? I am thoroughly disgusted with it ; we are going away soon, are we not, Irene Pavlovna? We have had enough of Baden, have we not? By the way, I have been playing this morning, and have won five hundred francs for you."

Irene playfully held out her hand.

"Give it to me," she said, "it will do nicely for pin-money."

"You shall have it in due time. Are you going so soon, *M'sieu* Litvinof?"

"Yes, you see that I am, do you not?"

Ratmirof's body gave another formal bend.

"I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you soon again."

"Farewell, Gregory Mikhailovitch," said Irene, "I will surely keep my promise."

"What promise? if I may ask," inquired her husband.

Irene smiled.

"No, I can not tell you. Between ourselves," she added, "it is only a trifle. It is in reference to *The Journey . . . where you will*. Stahl's book, you know!"

"Oh yes! I know! It has fine pictures in it."

Perfect harmony reigned once more in this charming family; Ratmirof was delighted by his wife's gracious reception and confiding manner.

## CHAPTER XXI.

“I had better think no more about it,” said Litvinof to himself as, while walking in the street, another struggle rose within his breast. “The matter is fully settled. She will keep her promise, and I have only to make the necessary arrangements. . . . She seemed to hesitate, though, when she spoke.” He shook his head despondingly. His own resolutions seemed strange and unnatural to him. But in the human mind, it is impossible for the same thoughts to continue long without a feeling of fatigue ; like the figures of the kaleidoscope, our impressions are constantly changing. Litvinof grew very weary.

He wanted to rest, if only for a little time, but Tatiana? He shuddered, yet without any hesitation, went to his hotel, with a strange feeling in his mind that he was this day bounding like a ball between the two. He must bring this torture to an end.

He went at once to Tatiana’s room, in a mechanical, listless way. Capitoline Markovna came forward to receive him. One glance at her face showed him that she

knew all. The poor old lady's eyes were swollen ; there was an expression of mingled indignation, pain and stupefaction on her burning face. She started to spring toward him, then stood motionless and, biting her trembling lips, gave him a look of hate, entreaty and despair ; yet all the while she seemed striving to persuade herself that this was but a foolish, senseless dream.

“So you have come,” she cried.

The door of the next room opened, and Tatiana, looking pale but very calm, softly entered. She sat down by her aunt and gently took her hand within her own.

“Sit down, Gregory Mikhailovitch,” she said to Litvinof, who was standing like a statue near the door. “I am very glad to see you once more. I have told my aunt of my decision, our decision ; she entirely approves of it. . . . Without mutual love, there can be no true happiness ; esteem alone is not enough,” (at the word *esteem* Litvinof involuntarily cast down his eyes,) “and it is better now to separate, than to repent when it is too late. Do you not think so, aunt ?”

“Without doubt,” began Capitoline Markovna, “without doubt. Tanioucha, one who can not appreciate you . . . who has decided . . .”

“Aunt,” said Tatiana, cutting her short, “remem-

ber what you promised me. You have always said to me, 'Truth, Tatiana, truth and frankness before all else.' Truth and frankness are not always pleasant ; if they were, the exercise of them would be no credit to us."

She tenderly kissed her aunt's white hair, then, turning toward Litvinof, continued,

"We have decided to leave Baden . . . we think it will be best for all of us."

"When do you go ?" asked Litvinof in a low tone.

He remembered that Irene had asked him the same question. Capitoline was about to answer, when Tatiana stopped her, gently passing her hand over her cheek.

"Soon, very soon, I think."

"Will you permit me to inquire in what direction you intend to go ?" continued Litvinof in the same low tone.

"First to Dresden, then to Russia . . ."

"What difference does it make to you, Gregory Mikhailovitch ?" asked Capitoline Markovna in a shrill voice.

"Aunt !" said Tatiana again.

There was a moment's silence, broken first by Litvinof.

“Tatiana Petrovna, you can not know how sad and painful are my feelings . . .”

Tatiana rose.

“Gregory Mikhailovitch,” she said, “say no more on that subject, I beg of you ; if not for your own sake, at least for mine. I have known you longer than since yesterday, and can easily understand what your feelings are. But why open these wounds afresh ? . . .” She stopped, striving to control herself, to hold back the tears which had started to her eyes ; she finally succeeded, and continued, “Why open these wounds again ? . . . But time is passing. I have one more favor to ask of you. Be kind enough to mail a letter for us ; it is very important, and we have not the time to go . . . Wait a minute, I will get it for you.”

As she reached the door, Tatiana cast an uneasy glance on Capitoline Markovna ; but she was sitting so calmly, she looked so gloomy with her frowning face and compressed lips, that Tatiana simply made a sign to her to say nothing, and left the room. Scarcely had the door closed upon her, however, when the frowning look disappeared from Capitoline Markovna’s face ; she rose, ran on tip-toe to Litvinof, and bending forward so as to look into his face, trembling and crying, began to speak in a low, quick tone.

“In God’s name, Gregory Mikhailovitch, what does this mean? It is a dream, is it not? *You* give up Tatiana, you cease to love her, you fail to keep your word! You, whom we always looked upon as being firm and true as steel! You? you? Gricha? . . .” After a short pause she went on again, “You are killing her, Gregory Mikhailovitch.” (The tears began to course rapidly down her cheeks.) “Now she conceals her feelings—you know her nature; she does not complain, nor strive to obtain her own desires, the very reason why others should care the more for her. She has been saying again and again to me, ‘Aunt, we must not lose our dignity.’ This is not a matter of dignity, but of life and death . . .” Tatiana was heard moving a chair in the next room. “Yes, it is her death that I warn you of,” continued the worthy old lady in a louder tone. “How did this happen? Are you bewitched? Did you not, only a few short days ago, write her the most loving letters? Can a true man act so? I am, as you know, an unprejudiced, self-reliant woman; I have educated Tatiana to be like me in this respect.”

“Aunt?” cried Tatiana from the next room.

“Gregory Mikhailovitch, your principles are the same as ours, and for such a man, the keeping of a promise is a sacred duty. If we do not fulfill our duties, what

will become of us? We must not follow out our own desires, without first consulting the good of others. To do this is wicked and criminal. We are not free to act always as we please."

"Aunt, please come here a moment," called Tatiana.

"In a minute, my darling, in a minute"—Capitoline Markovna seized Litvinof by the hand.—"I see that you are growing angry, Gregory Mikhailovitch." (I am not angry, he tried to say, but his tongue refused to do his bidding.) "I do not wish to provoke you, but rather to beg you to be merciful. Think while there yet is time, do not kill her, and destroy forever your own happiness. She will believe you still, Gricha, she will believe you; all is not yet lost; she loves you as you will never be loved again. Let us leave this hateful Baden; we will go away together. Free yourself from this charm which has bewitched you, and take pity . . ."

"Aunt!" Tatiana called again, with something of impatience in her tone.

Capitoline Markovna no longer heard her.

"Only say yes," she said to Litvinof, "and I will arrange all . . . Only nod your head, just a little nod like this!"

Litvinof would have gladly yielded up his life for her

but the word "yes" did not leave his lips, and he made not the slightest sign.

Tatiana returned with the letter in her hand ; Capitoline Markovna left Litvinof and, leaning over the table, pretended to be looking over some accounts and papers lying there.

Tatiana approached Litvinof. "Here is the letter I was speaking of," she said. "You will mail it at once, will you not?"

Litvinof raised his eyes . . . It was indeed his judge that stood before him. Tatiana seemed to him to have increased in stature ; her face, glorious with such beauty as he had never seen in it before, seemed as hard and cold as that of a marble statue ; her simple dress fell in stiff folds like those of antique drapery ; she was looking straight before her, and her cold, fixed glance seemed to come from eyes of stone. Litvinof read there his sentence ; he bowed, took the letter from her hand which was outstretched toward him, and silently left the room.

Capitoline Markovna threw herself into Tatiana's arms, but she gently pushed her back, dropping her eyes upon the ground ; the color returned to her face ; she cried, "Now let us lose no time," and again went into the

next room. Capitoline Markovna followed her, her head bowed down.

The letter which Tatiana had confided to Litvinof's care was addressed to one of her friends at Dresden, a German lady who rented furnished rooms. Litvinof dropped it into the box, and as it fell, it seemed to him that all his past life was buried with it. He walked away from the town and wandered for a long time in the narrow pathways of the vineyards; a feeling of self-contempt was constantly humming through his brain, like those buzzing flies which, at certain periods of the summer, we try in vain to drive away. The part which he had played in this last interview seemed very despicable to him . . . When he returned to the hotel, he inquired about the ladies, and was told that immediately after he had left them, they had asked to be driven to the depot, and had there taken the train without saying whither they were going. Their trunks had been sent down and their accounts settled, in the morning. Tatiana had given Litvinof the letter, in order to send him away and so avoid the pain of parting. He asked the porter if the ladies had not left a note for him; the porter gave him a negative reply, accompanying it with an inquiring glance. This sudden departure, after engaging the rooms for a week, evidently appeared strange to

him. Litvinof turned away and shut himself up in his room. He did not leave it till the next day. Part of the night he passed at his desk writing, and then tearing up what he had written. Already the sky was lighted by the first faint glimmerings of the dawn, when he at last brought his long-continued labor to a **close**, and finished a letter to Irene.

## CHAPTER XXII.

The following is the letter which he had written :

“ Tatiana went away to-day ; we shall never see each other more . . . I do not even know where she intends to live. She has taken with her every thing which has heretofore seemed beautiful and precious to me ; all my plans, all my resolutions have disappeared with her ; all my work is lost, my long study has accomplished nothing, my occupations are all without object, without value ; all my past life is dead to me ; I have buried it to-day. I feel this deeply and know it surely, and yet I am without regret. It is not for me to mourn ; that is impossible when I know that I am loved by you. I only wish to tell you that in the midst of all this buried past, of all these hopes reduced to smoke and ashes, there remains for me one living, unalterable fact, my love for you. That love is all that is left to me ; to call it my only treasure would not suffice ; I am filled with this love, it forms my very sense of being ; it is my future, my calling, my religion, and my country. You know me well, Irene, you know how I dislike all exag-

geration, yet however strong may seem the terms in which I have attempted to describe my feelings, you need not suspect that they are not sincere. It is not a young man, who, in love's first ecstasy, murmurs impossible vows into your ear, but rather a man of great experience, who pictures for you simply, frankly, almost with fear, what he recognizes to be true. Yes, your love is every thing to me. Judge then for yourself; can I leave this *all* in another's hands, to dispose of as he will? You belong to him! All my being, my heart's blood belong to him! I only an observer of my own life! No, this can not be! this can not be! To be able only to obtain by stealth that which I must have to breathe, to live, is destruction and death to me. I know how great a sacrifice I demand of you, without having any right to do so. But it is not false pride which leads to this; an egotist would not have even thought of it. Yes, my requirements are difficult, I am not surprised that you are terrified by them. You despise the men among whom you live, the society which surrounds you; but can you leave this same society, can you trample under foot the crowns which it has placed upon your brow, can you look down upon public opinion, the opinion of these hated men? Ask your own heart, Irene, do not attempt what is beyond your strength. I do not

wish to blame you, but remember: once before you could not resist temptation. I can give you but little in exchange for what you resign. I will say but one word more; if you do not feel to-morrow, to-day even, that you can willingly leave all and follow me—you see I speak boldly and do not qualify my words—that you do not fear a strange home, loneliness and the scorn of men; if you are not, in one word, sure of yourself, tell me of it frankly, without delay, and I will leave you; I will leave you with a broken heart, but with a blessing for your frankness. But if, my beautiful and brilliant queen, you really love a man as lowly and obscure as I, if really you are ready to share my fate—then give me your hand and let us start together on our dangerous journey. Only do not forget this fact: my decision can not be changed; I must have all or nothing. It may seem madness, but I can take no other course. I love you far too much."

This letter did not please Litvinof; it did not express exactly what he wished to say; he found much that was formal in it. In fact, it was not so good as some of those which he had torn up, but still it contained what was most important, and Litvinof, worn out and wearied, could write nothing better. The trouble was that he knew he had not given his thoughts an elegant expres

sion, and like every one not accustomed to literary work, he devoted too much attention to his style. The first letter that he wrote was the best; it flowed naturally from his heart. Litvinof did not think of this, but sent his letter to Irene. She answered it by the following short note:

“Come to me, to-day; *he* will not be home at all. Your letter has greatly troubled me. I do nothing but think, think, think . . . my head is dizzy. A heavy weight is on my heart; but you love me and I am happy. Come.”

She was in her own room when Litvinof called upon her. The same little girl who was watching on the staircase once before, opened the door for him. On the table, a round box full of laces was lying open. Irene was carelessly lifting them with one hand, while in the other she held Litvinof’s letter. She had been weeping; her lashes were still wet, her eyelids swollen; traces of tears were visible on her cheeks. Litvinof stopped in the doorway; she had not seen him.

“Why are you weeping?” he asked in a surprised tone.

She trembled as he spoke, then passed her hand slowly through her loosened hair and looked up at him with a smile.

“Why are you weeping?” repeated Litvinof.

She silently held up his letter.

“Why does that trouble you?” he asked after a moment’s pause.

“Come here and sit down by me; give me your hand . . . Yes, I have been weeping; does that surprise you? Is it an easy thing to do what you require?”

Again she held up his letter.

“I know it is difficult, Irene; I do not deny it, I understand your position perfectly; I can not but feel, however, that if you truly love me, if my arguments have proved convincing, it is strange that you should be thus in tears. I come here to hear my fate; is it death or life? Your answer must determine. Oh, do not look upon me so . . . Your eyes remind me of those old days at Moscow.”

Irene blushed and turned away her eyes, as if she, herself, felt that her glance betrayed her.

“What are you saying, Gregory? Are you not ashamed? You speak as though you doubted me. You are troubled by my tears, but you do not understand them. Your letter, dear, has made me think. You wrote me that you depended wholly on my love, that your former work no longer interested you. I asked

myself if love alone could satisfy you long. Will you not be wearied soon, will you not wish for a more active life, will you not long for those aims and occupations which you now abandon? These were the thoughts that troubled me and made me weep."

Litvinof looked fixedly at Irene, but she did not shun his gaze; they seemed endeavoring to read each other's secret thoughts, those thoughts which their words did not reveal.

"You mistake me," answered Litvinof; "I probably did not clearly express my meaning. Weariness! inaction! with the new strength that your love will give me? Oh! Irene, believe me, your love is a new life to me; it will nerve me to new effort."

Irene became thoughtful.

"Where shall we go?" she murmured.

"We will talk about that later . . . You consent then?"

She looked into his eyes.

"Will you be happy?"

"O Irene!"

"Will you never regret what you have done?"

As she spoke she leaned over the box of laces and began to hastily arrange them.

"Do not be provoked because I am busy with these

trifles. I have to attend a ball ; these things have been sent here for me to choose from. Oh ! my heart is full," she cried suddenly, resting her face upon the box. Tears started to her eyes ; she stepped back quickly : her tears might spoil the laces.

" Irene, you are weeping again," said Litvinof in a troubled voice.

" Yes, yes," answered Irene, " Ah ! Gregory, do not torment me, do not torment yourself. Let us trust each other. Why do I weep ? I do not understand, myself. You have heard my decision, you know that it will not change, that I will consent to . . . how did you phrase it . . . to all or nothing. . . . What more can you desire ? Let us trust each other. Why should we bind ourselves by further promises ? We are now together, we love each other ; can we do nothing better than to question or suspect our feelings ? Look at me : I do not deceive myself, I know that I am in the wrong, that *he* has a right to kill me. What matters it to me ? I am with you. A day spent thus is an eternity."

She rose and looked down, with a smile, on Litvinof, throwing back from her face a tress of hair, on which her tears were sparkling. A rich lace cape slipped from the table and fell beneath her feet ; she trampled on it with disdain.

“Are you not pleased with me to-day? Have I lost my beauty since last we met? Tell me, Gregory, do you love me?”

She seized him by both hands, and laid her head upon his breast, while her hair, loosed from its sumptuous folds, fell about him in a perfumed cloud.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Litvinof was walking up and down his room, lost in thought. He now must pass from theory to practice, he now must find the means for flight. He thought little of this, however, but kept constantly asking himself whether he could depend upon the promise which he had so firmly insisted on. Would she not recall it, even after having given so strong a pledge? Irene had said to him as he left her, "Make your arrangements and let me know when every thing is ready." This was the fact; he must doubt no more, but act at once; and he did act, at least in imagination. He must first think of money matters. Litvinof found that he was the possessor of 1328 florins; this sum was not very large, but would answer for present wants. He would write at once to his father, requesting him to send him all the money that he could, to sell the wood and a portion of the land. . . . But what reason could he give for this? . . . He would find a reason in due time. Irene had spoken of *her jewels*, but he did not care to take those into consideration; they might be of service at some fu-

ture day, if trouble should come upon them. Besides he had an excellent Geneva watch, which he could sell for . . . . 400 francs perhaps. Litvinof went to his banker and endeavored to obtain a loan, but the Baden bankers are very prudent and cautious men ; they generally show you a face a yard long when such a proposition is made to them : some of them laugh in your face, to let you understand that they appreciate your innocent joke. Litvinof, to his shame, now tried his luck at roulette ; he even went so far as to place a thaler on number thirty which figure corresponded with his age. He did this with a view to increasing his capital ; he did not succeed in so doing, however, but instead left upon the board twenty-eight florins. Another important matter was the passports. The authorities, however, were not very strict, in regard to a woman's passport ; in some countries, Belgium and England for example, they did not ask for it at all ; moreover, if it became necessary, he could procure a foreign one. Litvinof weighed all these matters very seriously in his mind ; his energy was great and fully equal to the occasion, but all the time, in spite of himself, there seemed something preposterous, almost ludicrous in all these plans. It seemed as though this whole affair was but a jest, as though no one ever eloped except in comedies and novels. Litvinof called

to mind the adventure of one of his friends, a cornet named Batzof, who carried off in a carriage drawn by three horses covered with bells, a merchant's daughter, after having first made both the girl and her parents drunk. He was overtaken in his flight and beaten almost to death. Litvinof was provoked with himself for thinking of an incident so unsuited to his present humor; then his thoughts turned to Tatiana, her sudden departure, the grief, suffering, and shame which he had caused, and then he understood too well that he had undertaken no trivial affair, and that he had been right when he had told Irene, that there was no other course for him to take. And again, at the mere name of Irene, a burning, irresistible desire took possession of his heart.

He heard the galloping of horses on the path and stepped aside. Irene passed by him, accompanied by the stout officer. She recognized Litvinof, nodded to him, and striking her horse sharply with the whip, was carried rapidly away, her dark veil streaming in the breeze.

“Not so fast,” cried the officer, as he tried to overtake her.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

The next morning, Litvinof had just returned from talking with his banker concerning the best method of having funds remitted to him, when the porter brought him a letter. He recognized Irene's writing, and, without breaking the seal—a presentiment of evil had come upon him—went to his room. The letter was in French, and read as follows :

“ I have been thinking all night of your proposition. . . . I will say to you exactly what I feel. You have been frank with me ; I will be so with you : I *can not* fly with you ; I am not *strong* enough. I know I am doing you great wrong—my second fault is greater than my first. I despise and reproach myself, but I can not change my feelings. It is in vain that I keep repeating to myself that I am destroying your happiness, and that you now have a perfect right to call me a coquette, after I have thus broken a solemn promise. . . . I am frightened and ashamed ; but I can not act differently ; I can not, I can not. I will not try to excuse myself, I will not say that I have been acting blindly . . . that

is no excuse for me. I will say, however, that I am yours—yours forever ; do with me as you will. But to fly—to give up all . . . . no ! no ! no ! I asked you to save me ; I hoped to atone for my wrongs to you, to destroy my past life ; but there is no safety for me ; the poison has gone too deep ; I have not breathed this air so many years without feeling its power. I hesitated long before writing this letter ; I am fearful of the effect it will have upon you. I can not live without your love ; but it does not seem right to me, to conceal the truth from you, especially as you are about taking measures for the accomplishment of our plan. Ah ! it was a delightful dream. O, my darling, treat me as a feeble and worthless woman ! despise me, but do not desert me ! do not desert your Irene ! I can not live away from the fashionable world, nor can I live without your love. We shall return soon to St. Petersburg. Come with us ; we will find something for you to do ; your talents will not be lost, but will find there an honorable application. Only live near me, love me as I am, with all my weaknesses and faults, and be sure that you will be very dear to your Irene. Come to me now, as soon as possible ; I shall not have a minute's peace till I have seen you."

The blood rushed to Litvinof's face, remained there for a minute, and then fell back heavily upon his heart.

He again read Irene's letter, and again, as once before at Moscow, dropped senseless on the sofa. A dark abyss seemed suddenly to yawn before him, and he looked about him in stupid terror. He was again made the victim of caprice, worse than that, of deceit and fraud. His life hopes were torn up, as it were, by the roots, and now the last branch to which he could have clung, was wrested from him. "Follow us to St. Petersburg," he repeated, with a sardonic laugh. "We will find something there for you to do. They would make a gentleman of the bed-chamber of me, perhaps. Whom does she mean by 'we'? There is something mysterious and terrible about her past life that she wishes to destroy—something belonging to this world of intrigue—this society of Belskys and Dolskys. What a magnificent fate would be in store for me! To live near her, to visit her, to share the melancholy and corruption of the fashionable lady, who is tired of society and yet can not live away from it. To be the guest of the house, and naturally the friend of His Excellency . . . until the caprice dies away, until the novelty has passed, and I am displaced by the stout officer or M. Finikof. This is all possible and may seem honorable to some. Does she not speak of usefully employing my 'talents'? As regards our plan, however, that is only a dream. . . ."

Now arose in Litvinof's soul wild bursts of passion, like the sudden gusts which precede a storm. Each succeeding sentence in Irene's letter increased his wrath ; he was most angered by her assurances of the constancy of her affection. "This can not be," he cried at last ; "I will not permit her to dispose of my life so cruelly. . . ."

Litvinof rose suddenly and caught up his hat. But what was he to do ? Go to her ? Answer her letter ? He stood still and his arms fell heavily by his side. What was he to do ?

Had he not himself offered her this fatal opportunity for choice ? It was not what he desired, but it was the best that he could do. She had deceived him, that was true ; she was the first to speak of leaving all and following him, that too was true ; but she did not deny her fault, she called herself a weak woman, she did not wish to deceive him as she had deceived herself. How could he answer that ? She was not hypocritical at least, she was frank even to cruelty. There was nothing that compelled her to explain herself thus promptly ; she might have kept him patient by her promises, and held him in suspense until the time for her departure with her husband for Italy. But she had poisoned his life ; two lives in fact. Yet, when he thought of Tatiana, it was not

Irene that was at fault, it was himself alone ; he could not cast off the responsibility of this wrong, it was like an iron fetter around his neck. These were the facts ; what now remained for him to do ?

He threw himself again upon the sofa,—and again, darkly and painfully, the moments flew swiftly by. . . .

“ Yet if I can believe her,” he said suddenly, “ she loves me. Is there not something like an unyielding law of nature in this passion which has smouldered for so many years, only to break out again with so much fury ? Live at St. Petersburg. . . . I should not be the first one who has occupied such a position. Where could I have taken her if she had fled with me ? ” He began to dream again ; Irene appeared before him as he remembered her the last time they had met ; but only for a moment ; he again assumed control of his imagination and, with increased anger, put away these memories and this seductive image. “ You hold out to me a golden cup,” he cried, “ but there is poison in it, your white wings are soiled. . . . Leave me ! Remain here with you, when I have . . . given up her who was to be my wife . . . . that would be too infamous ! ”

He wrung his hands in agony, and another face, with traces of suffering upon it, with a mute reproach in

its farewell glance, rose before him from the dark abyss. . . .

Litvinof thus tortured himself for a long time ; for a long time these thoughts kept passing hurriedly through his fevered brain. At last he became calm ; he had made a final decision. From the beginning, he had known that he would arrive at this result. It had first appeared to him like a point in the far distance, scarcely perceptible through the darkness and fury of the inward storm ; it had slowly but irresistibly approached him, until at last it had planted itself coldly, like a blade of steel, within his breast.

Litvinof drew his trunk from the corner of the room, packed it again, in a mechanical kind of way, without hurry or confusion ; he then rang for the waiter, paid his bill, and sent the following note, written in Russian, to Irene :

“ I do not know whether you have, this time, done me a greater wrong than you did before, but the blow itself is much more violent. . . . It is the last. You say to me, I can not ; I answer you in the same words ; I can not . . . do what you desire ; I can not and I will not. Do not answer me. It will be impossible for you to give me the only answer that I will accept. I leave to-morrow morning by the first train. Fare

well, may you be happy. We shall probably never meet again."

Litvinof did not leave his room during the whole day. Did he expect an answer to his note? I can not tell. Toward seven o'clock, a lady wrapped in a dark cloak, with a thick veil over her face, twice approached the entrance to his hotel. Having gone away a little distance, and having noticed something which evidently startled her, she finally, with a determined gesture, turned her steps a third time in the same direction.

"Where are you going, Irene Pavlovna?" cried a panting voice behind her.

She turned about with a sudden, nervous motion. . . . Potoughine was running after her. She stood still, thought a moment, then moved toward him and seized him by the hand.

"Take me away, take me away," she cried.

"What is the matter, Irene Pavlovna?"

"Take me away," she repeated in a firmer tone, "unless you wish me to stay here forever."

Potoughine bowed humbly, and both of them were soon lost to view.

Early the next morning, as Litvinof was on the point of leaving, Potoughine entered his room. He came toward him and grasped his hand without speaking a

word. Litvinof also was silent. They both wore a constrained look, and both seemed making vain attempts to smile.

"I came to wish you a pleasant journey," finally stammered Potoughine.

"How did you know that I was going away to-day?" asked Litvinof.

Potoughine was looking attentively at the ceiling. . . . "I heard of it . . . from one you know. The last conversation we had together was so strange. . . I did not like to have you go away, without expressing to you my sincere sympathy."

"You sympathize with me now? . . . when I am going away . . .?"

Potoughine gave Litvinof a sad look.

"Ah! Gregory Mikhailovitch, Gregory Mikhailovitch," he said, with a deep sigh, "we do not need to be cautious and reserved with each other. I believe you are not very familiar with our national literature, and probably you have never heard of Vaska Bouslaef?"

"Of whom?"

"Of Vaska Bouslaef, the worthy Novgorodian . . . his story is recorded in the chronicles of Kircha Dani-lof.

"What Bouslaef?" growled Litvinof, who was some-

what disconcerted by this unexpected turn of the conversation. "I do not know him."

"I presume not. I wish, however, to call your attention to the story. Vaska Bouslaef, after having led his Novogorodians on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and after having, to their great horror, bathed in the sacred river Jordan, this logical Vaska Bouslaef climbed to the top of Mount Tabor. On the summit of this mountain there was a stone which men of every nation had tried, in vain, to move. Vaska wished to make the attempt. As he was climbing up, a skull lay in his path, and he kicked it from him. The skull spoke, saying, 'Why do you spurn me? I once was living, I now am rolling in the dust; your fate will be like mine.' In fact, Vaska tried to move the stone and had almost started it, when his foot slipped, and falling forward, he broke his skull. I ought here to observe to my friends, the lovers of the Slave, who are so much inclined to spurn the skulls of other 'effete' nations, that it would be well for them to reflect upon this legend."

"But what has all this to do with me?" interrupted Litvinof impatiently. "It is time for me to go; excuse me. . . ."

"It has this to do with you," answered Potoughine, while his eyes shone with so friendly a light that Lit-

vinof was astonished by it; "that as you have not spurned the skull, perhaps in return, you may be able to move the fatal stone. I do not wish to detain you, only permit me to say farewell."

"I shall not try to move it," answered Litvinof, as he embraced Potoughine; and with the sad feelings that filled his heart, there mingled, for a moment, a sentiment of pity for this poor, solitary being. But he must go. He began to gather up his luggage.

"Can I carry any thing for you?" said Potoughine.

"No, I thank you, do not disturb yourself; I can easily carry every thing myself."

He put on his hat, and took up his carpet-bag.

"You were saying," he inquired, turning as he reached the door, "that you had seen her?"

"Yes."

"Well . . . what is she doing?"

Potoughine did not reply at once.

"She expected you yesterday . . . She will look for you to-day."

"Ah! . . . tell her . . . no, it will do no good. Good-by . . . good-by."

Litvinof rapidly descended the stairs, threw himself into a carriage, and arrived at the depot without casting a single glance on the town, where he was leaving what

seemed a part of his own life. . . . He appeared to have trusted himself to a strong wave which was bearing him swiftly on, and he seemed firmly resolved not to make an effort to escape from it. Already he had reached the railway carriage.

“Gregory Mikhailovitch” . . . . murmured a suppliant voice behind him.

He trembled. Could it be Irene? It was, indeed. She was standing on the platform wrapped in her maid’s shawl, her tresses falling loosely from beneath her hat. She was gazing on him with eyes that were half closed. “Return, return; I have come to look for you,” those eyes appeared to say to him. What did they not promise? She did not move; she had no strength to speak, but by her attitude and expression seemed beseeching him for mercy.

Litvinof could scarcely resist the temptation to give way, to spring toward her, but the saving wave still bore him on. He leaped into the carriage, and, turning to ward Irene, pointed to a vacant seat at his side. She understood him. There was yet time. A step, a single motion, and they would be borne away together. . . . While she hesitated, the whistle sounded and the train moved on.

Litvinof threw himself back upon the seat. Irene

staggered to a bench, and sank down upon it, to the great astonishment of a certain diplomatist, who happened to be strolling in that direction.

He was only slightly acquainted with Irene, but felt greatly interested in her. Seeing that she appeared to have fainted away, he thought it his duty as a gallant gentleman to go at once to her assistance. His astonishment was increased, however, when at the first word that he uttered, she rose suddenly, pushed away his offered arm, and gaining the street, quickly disappeared in one of those white fogs, which are so common at Baden in the early days of autumn.

## CHAPTER XXV.

I once entered the hut of a peasant woman who had just lost her only son ; to my great surprise, I found her calm, almost cheerful. "Do not wonder," said her husband, who doubtless noticed the impression made upon me, "she is hardened into love now." Litvinof was thus ossified—a perfect calm had taken possession of him during the first few hours of his journey. Entirely worn out, almost unconscious, he was yet alive, after all the pain and torture of the last week, after all the blows which had fallen, one after another, upon him. He was not one who could, with impunity, receive such blows. He had now no plan before him, he tried to drive all thought from his mind ; he was going to Russia because he must go somewhere ; but he had no object in going thither. He had lost all sense of his own individuality ; he took no notice of his own acts. It seemed to him sometimes as though he were carrying about with him his own corpse ; it was only a painful sense of hopeless grief that convinced him he was still alive. Sometimes it seemed impossible to him that a woman, ~~that passion~~

could have so influenced him. . . . "What shameful weakness!" he murmured, and throwing back his cloak, he settled himself more comfortably in his seat. He must now begin a new life, he thought. A moment more, and he was smiling bitterly, astonished at himself. He looked out of the window. It was an unpleasant day ; it did not rain, but the fog was dense and low clouds covered the sky. The train was moving against the wind ; clouds of smoke, now light, now dark, rolled by the window. Litvinof watched these clouds. Ceaselessly they rose and fell, clinging to the grass and bushes, stretching themselves out, melting in the damp air, or whirling about in eddies, ever changing yet ever the same. Sometimes the wind changed, or the road made a turn, then all this mass of vapor would suddenly disappear, only to be seen again immediately, on the other side, and, in an interminable cloud, hide from view the valley of the Rhine.

Litvinof continued to gaze in silence ; an odd fancy had taken possession of him. He was alone in the carriage ; there was no one to listen to him. "Smoke ! smoke !" he kept repeating to himself, and suddenly all the past seemed like smoke to him : his whole life, his life in Russia ; all that was human, but chiefly all that was Russian in his experience. "All is but smoke and

“vapor,” he thought ; “every thing is constantly changing, one shape resolves itself into another, one event succeeds another, but in reality every thing remains the same. There is much stir and confusion, but all these clouds vanish at last without leaving any trace, without having accomplished any thing. The wind changes its direction, they pass to the other side and there continue their feverish and fruitless motion.” He remembered what had taken place during the last few years, and how great had been the tumult and excitement. . . . “Smoke,” he muttered, “smoke.” He remembered the noisy and disorderly discussions in Goubaret’s room, and the disputes which he had heard between other persons, of high and low degree, radical and conservative, old and young. . . . “Smoke!” he repeated, “smoke and vapor!” He thought finally of the famous evening party, of the speeches and arguments of the statesmen there, and also of Potoughine’s long disquisitions. . . . “Smoke! smoke!” he cried, “and nothing more.” Then his own efforts, his desires, his trials and his dreams all came before his mind. The memory of these served only to provoke a gesture of discouragement. Meanwhile the train was rushing on. Rastadt, Carlsruhe, and Bruchsal were already far behind him ; on the right the mountains retreated in the distance, then approached

again, but they were now less lofty and not covered with trees as before. The train made a short turn ; they were at Heidelberg. The carriages glided into the station ; the newsdealers began to cry all kinds of papers, even those of Russian origin. Many of the travelers stepped out upon the platform and walked about, but Litvinof did not leave his place ; he was sitting there with his head bowed down. Suddenly he was called by name ; he looked up ; Bindasof's face was visible in the doorway, and behind it (could he be mistaken ?) there surely were the faces he had lately seen at Baden. There was Madame Soukhantchikof, there were Vorochilof and Bambaef. All were looking at him, while Bindasof cried out,

“Where is Pichtchalkin ? we expected him ; but no matter, come on ; we are going to call on Goubaref.”

“Yes, brother, yes, Goubaref expects us ; come on,” repeated Bambaef, tossing his arms up and down.

Litvinof would have been angry, if he had not felt too sad at heart. He first stared at Bindasof, then turned away in silence.

“Do you not understand, Goubaref is here,” cried Madame Soukhantchikof, her eyes starting from their sockets.

Litvinof did not stir.

"But listen, Litvinof," cried Bambaeff, returning to the charge, "not only is Goubareff here, but also a whole phalanx of young, intelligent and distinguished Russians; they are all interested in natural science, and all have the most liberal opinions. Remain here to see them at all events. One of them is a certain . . . I have forgotten his name; he is a prodigy of genius though."

"Oh! leave him alone, Rostislaf Ardalionitch," said Madame Soukhantchikof. "You see what this man is, his family are all like him. He has an aunt, whom I thought, at first, to be a worthy woman. I was traveling with her only two days ago, however; she had been but a short time at Baden and was on her way home. While we were on the train, I began to question her. Will you believe it? I could scarcely get a word from this hateful, proud aristocrat."

Poor Capitoline Markovna, to be called an aristocrat! Could she ever have dreamt of such a humiliation?

Litvinof was still silent; he turned yet further from them and pulled his hat over his eyes. At last the train started.

"Say something, you man of stone!" cried Bindasoff. "What do you act so for? You mole! you sleepy-head!"

The train was moving faster, he could now insult him with perfect safety.

“ Miser! snail! periwig !” he added.

Was this last appellation original with Bindasof, or had he borrowed it from some one? I do not know; there is one thing certain, however, it seemed so witty to two of the young, intelligent and distinguished gentlemen, interested in natural science, who were standing near, that a few days afterward, it made its appearance in a Russian periodical which was at that time published at Heidelberg.\*

Litvinof again returned to his refrain: “ Smoke, smoke, smoke !”

“ Here, for instance,” he said to himself, “ there are at Heidelberg more than a hundred Russian students; they are all studying chemistry, physics and physiology, and will not think or speak on any other subjects. Four or five years from now, there will not be fifteen of our countrymen studying under these same professors. . . The wind will have changed, the smoke will blow on the other side. . . Smoke . . . smoke . . . smoke !”†

\* A fact.

† This presentiment of Litvinof is now realized: in 1866, there were but thirteen Russian students at Heidelberg during the summer, and only twelve in winter.

During the night, he passed through Cassel. As the twilight deepened into darkness, an intolerable agony preyed like a vulture at his heart. He began to weep, with his head buried in one corner of the carriage. His tears flowed for a long time, without, however, affording him the least relief.

During this time, in a hotel at Cassel, Tatiana was lying on a bed, burning with fever ; Capitoline Markovna was standing near her.

“Tania,” she said to her, “do let me send a telegram to Gregory Mikhailovitch ; do let me, Tania.”

“No, aunt,” she answered, “you must not. Do not be frightened. Give me some water ; I shall soon be better.”

In fact, a week afterward, she had quite recovered, and the aunt and niece proceeded on their journey.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

Without stopping either at St. Petersburg or Moscow, Litvinof returned to his humble home. He was startled when he first saw his father, he appeared so old and broken down. The old man, on seeing his son again, was as much delighted as one so near the close of life could be. He hastened to give him charge of his affairs, which were in great disorder, and, after a few weeks of sickness and pain, passed quietly away. Litvinof now was left alone in the old family home ; he began to improve his lands with an aching heart, without any liking for his work, without hope, without money. The management of an estate in Russia is no pleasant task, as too many of us know. We will not therefore enter too minutely into the difficulties which Litvinof encountered.

It was impossible for him to introduce improvements and reforms ; the application of that knowledge which he had acquired in foreign countries had to be indefinitely postponed ; necessity compelled him to live as he could from day to day, and to make all manner of concessions, both material and moral. The new order of

things worked badly, the old forms had lost their strength; inexperience had to struggle with dishonesty and fraud. The old institutions had no sustaining power, they were breaking asunder like our vast, mossy marshes: only that noble word, "liberty," pronounced by the Czar, floated over them, as the Spirit of God once moved upon the face of the waters. It was necessary, above all else, to have patience, not passive, but diligent, persistent and indomitable patience. This was doubly painful for Litvinof, in the state of mind in which he found himself. Life had few attractions for him . . . could labor then present him any?

A year passed by, a second followed it, the third had already begun its course. The grand thought of emancipation was commencing to produce its fruits, to influence the customs of the people. The seed which had been sown had sprouted and appeared above the ground, and could now no more be trampled on by either an open or a secret enemy. Although Litvinof finally rented to the peasants the greater portion of his land on shares, and although this land was all cultivated in the primitive manner, yet he met with some success. He started his manufactory, worked a small farm with five free laborers whom he had finally selected after trying forty, and paid off his heaviest debts. His natural pow-

ers returned to him ; he began to look like himself again. During all this time a feeling of deep sadness remained with him : he was leading a life which ill accorded with his years ; he had shut himself up within a narrow circle, but he no longer exhibited his former indifference to every thing about him ; he walked among men like a living man. The last traces of the charm, under whose influence he had fallen, had also disappeared ; and all that had taken place at Baden now seemed to him like a dream. And Irene . . . her image, too, had paled away and vanished ; only something vaguely dangerous was dimly outlined through the mist which concealed it. He rarely had news of Tatiana ; he only knew that she was with her aunt at her home, which was some distance from her own family estates ; that she lived there quietly, going out but little and receiving few visitors ; also that she was enjoying excellent health. One fine May morning, he was seated in his study, carelessly glancing over the last number of a paper from St. Petersburg, when his servant announced the arrival of his uncle. This uncle, a cousin of Capitoline Markovna, had just been making her a visit. He had bought an estate in Litvinof's neighborhood and was about taking possession of it. He remained several days with his nephew, and talked much with him concerning

Tatiana. On the day after his departure, Litvinof wrote to his cousin, for the first time since their separation. He asked permission to open a correspondence with her, and also stated that he hoped some time to meet her again. He awaited her answer with great anxiety. . . . It came at last. Tatiana replied in a friendly manner. "If you are thinking of making us a visit," she said in closing, "we shall be very happy to see you at any time." Captoline Markovna also sent him her regards. Litvinof evinced an almost childish joy ; it was a long, long time since his heart had beaten so gayly. Every thing seemed bright and cheerful to him. When the sun rises and drives away the darkness of the night, a light breeze passes over the earth's bosom, reviving all nature with its cooling breath. Litvinof felt thus strengthened and rejoiced by some mysterious influence. He was all smiles that day, even when overseeing his laborers and giving them their orders. He immediately began to prepare for the journey, and two weeks later was on his way to visit Tatiana.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

He traveled slowly, by cross-roads, without any adventure of importance, except that once the tire came from one of the wheels. The blacksmith worked long upon it, swearing at the wheel and at himself, but finally declared that he could not repair it. Fortunately they found that they could get on very well, even with a broken wheel, as long as the road was "soft"—that is, muddy. This accident led to three curious encounters. At one post-house he came upon a meeting of land-owners, presided over by Pichtchalkin, who appeared to him like another Solon or Solomon, so full of wisdom were his words, so perfectly did he seem to possess the confidence of all those about him. Pichtchalkin's very appearance reminded one of the seven sages of antiquity: he had but one lock of hair upon his head; an expression of dignified and happy virtue was imprinted on his stolid and solemn countenance. He congratulated Litvinof on having come—if he might use so ambitious an expression—into his own province, then sat majestically silent, overcome by the great

thoughts which crowded upon him. Litvinof received some news from him, however, especially in relation to Vorochilof. It seemed that he had again entered the army, and had already read to the officers of his regiment a lecture on Buddhism or Dynamism, or something of that nature . . . . Pichtchalkin could not remember exactly what. At another station, there was much delay in harnessing the horses ; it was just daylight. Litvinof was asleep in the carriage. A voice which seemed familiar woke him up ; he opened his eyes. . . . Sure enough, there was M. Goubaref, in a gray jacket and wide pantaloons, standing on the post-house steps, and uttering imprecations against every one. He looked again. No ; it was not M. Goubaref . . . but how perfect the resemblance ! This person was almost exactly like him, only his mouth was larger, he had a better set of teeth, a more savage look, a larger nose, a more bushy beard and, in general, a stouter and heavier appearance.

“ R-r-rascals ! r-r-rascals !” he was shouting in a desperately angry tone, “ heathen that you are ! Where is your so much vaunted liberty ? . . . We can not even have our horses ! . . . R-r-rascals !”

“ R-r-rascals ! r-r-rascals !” roared a second voice behind him, and another person, in gray jacket and

wide pantaloons, appeared upon the steps. This was really, without any possible doubt, the genuine M. Goubaref, Stephen Nikolaevitch Goubaref. "Heathen!" he continued, following his brother's cue, (it was his elder brother, the gentleman of the old school who had charge of his affairs.) "We must crush them—that is the only thing to do. Hear them talk of liberty, of the mayor! . . . Wait a moment, I will show them . . . Where is M. Roston? What is he doing? He ought to save us from this trouble, the lazy rascal. . . ."

"I told you, brother," remarked the elder Goubaref, "that he was good for nothing; he is a very lazy rascal. Monsieur Roston! Monsieur Roston! Where are you?"

"Roston! Roston!" howled the younger, the great Goubaref. "Call louder, can't you, Dorimedonthe Nicolaevitch!"

"I have called till I am hoarse, Stephen Nicolaevitch. Monsieur Roston!"

"Here! here!" answered a panting voice, and at the corner of the house appeared . . . Bambaeef.

Litvinof gave a cry of surprise. The unfortunate enthusiast was covered with an old overcoat, the sleeves of which were all in rags. His features had not changed;

they had shrunk up rather ; his haggard eyes wore a look of servile terror and submission, while the dyed mustaches still ornamented his thick upper lip. From the top of the steps, the two brothers began, with the most touching unanimity, to hurl curses on him. He stopped short in the mud, and bowing humbly, endeavored to appease them by a servile smile, all the time kneading his hat with his large red hands, and assuring them that the horses would be ready in a moment. The brothers, however, did not cease abusing him, until the younger one perceived Litvinof. Either he recognized him, or was ashamed to make such an exhibition of himself before a stranger ; for he suddenly turned about like a bear, and, biting his beard, returned into the post-house. The elder brother also ceased, and with a no less bear-like step, followed him in his retreat. It was very evident that the great Goubaref had not lost his influence in his own country.

Bambaeff was following the two brothers when Litvinof called him by name. He turned about, shaded his eyes with his hand and recognizing Litvinof, ran toward him with outstretched arms. When he reached the carriage, however, he leaned against the door, while the tears spouted from his eyes.

“Come, come,” said Litvinof, leaning over him, and touching him on the shoulder.

He still kept sobbing.

“See . . . see what I have come to” . . . he stammered.

“Bambaef!” roared the brothers, from within the house.

Bambaef raised his head, and quickly wiped away his tears.

“Good-day, my friend,” he murmured, “good-day and good-by. You hear, they are calling me.”

“But what brings you here?” asked Litvinof. “What does all this mean? I thought they were calling a Frenchman. . . .”

“I am their steward,” answered Bambaef, pointing toward the house. “They have given me a French name, as a joke. What else could I do, brother? I was nearly dead with hunger, I was destitute, I had to take the yoke upon me. I am not ambitious now.”

“Has *he* been in Russia a long time? How could he leave his friends?”

“Oh! brother, those friendships are all ended . . . As to Madame Soukhantchikof, he simply showed her the door. Overcome with grief, she went to Portugal.”

“What, to Portugal? How ridiculous!”

"Yes, brother, to Portugal, in company with two Matrenians."

"With whom?"

"With the Matrenians. That is the name of her party."

"Has Matrena Kouzminichna a party? Is it a large one?"

"There are three members of it . . . It is nearly six months since Goubaref returned to Russia. Some of the others were placed under guard, but nothing has happened to him. He lives in the country with his brother, and if you could now hear . . ."

"Bambaef!"

"Right away, Stephen Nicolaevitch, right away. I trust you are flourishing and doing well, dear friend. Where are you going now? Do you remember Baden? That was the life for you. That makes me think of Bindasof. Did you know that he was dead? He was employed in the brandy business, got into a quarrel in a tavern, and had his head broken by a billiard cue. Yes, the times are very hard. But I will always boast of Russia, Russia alone. Look at that pair of geese; you can not find their equal in all Europe. They are genuine Armazas geese."

After this final burst of enthusiasm, Bambaef ran into

the post-house, whence he was being loaded with all manner of imprecations.

Toward the close of the same day, Litvinof drew near Tatiana's home. The little house in which she lived was situated on the side of a hill, near the bank of a small river, and was surrounded by a new-made garden. The house was new, scarcely finished in fact; it could be seen from quite a distance, overlooking the river and the fields. Litvinof descried it while yet a long way off. During the last stage of his journey, he had felt greatly troubled, and his trouble kept increasing. "How shall I be received," he thought; "how shall I present myself?" In order to escape from this train of thought, he commenced a conversation with the postilion, an aged peasant with a gray beard, who was able, however, to count more miles in the journey than there really were. He asked him if he knew the owners of Chestof.

"Of Chestof? Of course I know them! They are good women, nothing can be said against them. They help the poor. They are real doctors. They are always doing good. If any one is taken sick or is hurt in any way, he goes right off to them; they give him a little powder or a plaster, and he is cured. And he has only to thank them. 'We do not do this for money,' they

say. They have opened a school too . . . that, though, I think is very foolish."

While the postilion was thus talking, Litvinof could not take his eyes from the little house. A lady dressed in white appeared on the piazza, looked out as though watching for some one, then disappeared again.

"Was it not Tatiana?"

His heart was beating violently.

"Faster! faster!" he cried to the postilion.

The postilion whipped up his horses. A few minutes more . . . and the carriage passed through an open gate. On the piazza he saw Capitoline Markovna running to meet him. Out of breath, her face red with excitement, she cried out, "I knew you, I knew you first! It was you! it was you! I knew you!"

Litvinof leaped lightly to the ground, without giving the little Cossack time to open the door for him, and, hurriedly kissing Capitoline Markovna, rushed into the house, ran through the hall and dining-room . . . and found himself face to face with Tatiana. She was looking on him with a kind and gentle glance, (she had grown a little thinner, which did not at all detract from her appearance,) and holding out her hand to him. He did not take it, but fell upon his knees before her. She had not expected this and knew not what to say or do

. . . tears came to her eyes ; she was frightened, but, at the same time, there was an expression of joy upon her face.

“What is this, Gregory Mikhailovitch ?” she said at last.

He was kissing the hem of her dress, recalling, with a happy and contrite heart, how before at Baden he had thus fallen at her feet . . . But then . . . and now !

“Tania,” he cried, “Tania, can you forgive me ?”

“Aunt, aunt, what does this mean ?” she cried, turning toward Capitoline Markovna, who had just entered the room.

“Leave him alone, Tatiana,” answered the good old lady ; “do you not see he has repented.”

We need add no more, the reader can supply the rest.  
But Irene ?

She is still as fascinating as ever, notwithstanding her thirty years ; she has a countless host of admirers, and would have more if . . .

Will the reader permit us to take him for a moment to St. Petersburg, and introduce him within one of the most splendid mansions of that city. Here is a vast apartment, decorated, I will not say richly—that is too poor a word—but sumptuously, with solemn splendor and exquisite art. Do you not feel a thrill of awe ?

You have penetrated within a temple consecrated to the purest virtue, to the highest morality, to that which is not earthly but heavenly in its nature. Here reigns the most mysterious silence. Curtains of velvet on the doors and at the windows, a soft, thick carpet on the floor, every thing about the room is arranged to soften even the slightest sound. The subdued light of shaded lamps serves to inspire gentle thoughts ; a soft, sweet odor is perceptible in the air ; even the tea-urn on the table bubbles in a reserved and cautious manner.

The lady of the house, a very important person in St. Petersburg society, speaks in so low a tone as scarcely to be heard. She always talks as though there were a very sick person in the room, while her sister, who is pouring out the tea, moves her lips, without making the slightest sound, so that a young man sitting opposite her, who has by chance entered this temple, can not understand what she wishes of him, though she is murmuring for the sixth time, "Will you take a cup of tea?" In the corners of the room are standing men, young but venerable : their looks betray a quiet servility ; the expression of their faces is obsequious but unalterably calm ; numerous decorations sparkle on their manly breasts. The conversation too is very peaceable ; its subjects are of a religious or patriotic nature, as, for instance, the

*Mysterious Drop*, by Glinka, the missions to the East, the monasteries and orders of White Russia. Servants now and then enter the room ; their immense calves, encased in silk stockings, tremble silently at every step. The respectful bearing of these servants renders still more apparent the general air of virtue, piety and distinction. . . . it is indeed a temple !

“Have you seen Madame Ratmirof to-day ?” a lady languidly inquires.

“I met her to-day, while calling on Lise,” answers the lady of the house, with an ethereal voice, which murmurs softly like an Eolian harp. “I am sorry for her . . . she has a capricious nature . . . she is not sincere.”

“Yes, yes,” replies the lady who first spoke. “You remember Peter Ivanovitch said, and said very justly, that she had a capricious nature.”

“She is not sincere,” are the words exhaled like incense from the lips of the lady of the house. “She is a wayward creature ; she has a capricious nature.”

“She has a capricious nature,” her sister’s lips seem to repeat.

This is the reason why all the young men are not enamored of Irene. They are afraid of her, they fear her “capricious nature.” This is the phrase generally used

when speaking of Irene, and, like all such phrases, it contains something of truth. It is not alone the young men who fear her, but also those of advanced years and high position. No one else can so perfectly draw out the weak and ludicrous side of every character ; no one else can so stab one with a single word, a word the more cutting because it is spoken by rosy and smiling lips. It would be difficult to tell what is passing in her heart, but, amid all the crowd of her admirers, no one is spoken of as the favored one.

Irene's husband is rapidly advancing in that path which the French call the path of honors. The stout officer has passed by him, while the polite one is left behind. In the city where Irene dwells lives also our friend Sozonthe Potoughine ; he very seldom sees Irene. The little girl confided to his care is dead. There is no longer any necessity for continuing his acquaintance with Madame Ratmillof.

This book is not  
worth a cent -

Reader -

I have heard that  
this writer was a great  
orator but it does  
not seem to be  
a fact -

Good!

Excellent !!

Слово правильное Книга!

Я могу читать, но  
Не могу переводить

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vous Jitez, il Jont.

Très Bony.  
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Très Bony.  
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p. 206

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Go back  
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LEISURE HOUR SEI

ESSAYS  
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